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GEORGE ALLEN,

THE ONLY SON.

~~~~~  
BY

MISS MARY ANNA FOX.  
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Illustrated with Elegant Engravings,

FROM ORIGINAL DESIGNS

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GEORGE ALLEN.

THERE IS not, perhaps, in the world, certainly not in New England, more lovely scenery than can be found in the valley of the Connecticut.

Nature seems to have expended her store of loveliness to grace the whole course of this noble river; and let any one, who thinks he must cross the Atlantic to find views worthy of being immortalized by his pen or pencil, go to the spot where the Connecticut takes its rise, and follow its windings, as it flows majestically toward the ocean, until its clear waters mingle with the dark waves of Long Island Sound, and I will venture to say, he will return home willing to admit that sublimity or beauty of scenery may be found

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in our own dear land, in at least equal perfection with the far famed vales of Greece or Italy.

If a traveller in the western part of Massachusetts should pass through the village of S——, one of the many little towns which seem to the delighted eye to realize all that has been said or sung of the groves and vales of Arcadia, he could not fail of being attracted by the picturesque situation of a farm-house on the east bank of the river. It stands on a swell of land, overlooking the Connecticut, as it sweeps round a projecting headland, curling its sparkling surface into snowy waves, as though indignant at being forced to turn out of its way to wind round the base of the dark gray rocks which look down upon it so frowningly.

This dwelling is one of those hospitable, generous-looking houses, which give one a favorable idea of the owner, from the comfort and cultivation which surround it. The front of the house is almost covered with a luxuriant woodbine, that has climbed to the top of one of the ample, old-fashioned chimneys, and even wound its tendrils round the overhanging boughs of a venerable elm, which stands near the door, with the ends of its long graceful branches actually touch-

ing the ground, and thus forming a perfect arch, or natural portico, under which you must pass to enter the front door.

The long range of barns and storehouses, which are seen in the background, speak to the passing observer the richness and high cultivation of the farm, and seem to indicate the abode of peace and happiness. But how little can we judge of man by his outward circumstances! The meanest laborer on that farm may well be an object of envy, could such a feeling enter his breast, to the man who calls all these fair fields and abundant crops his own; for the most abject poverty is not so hard to bear as the bitter reproaches of a self-accusing conscience. Twenty years ago this man thought himself the happiest of human beings: his farm was productive, his health good, and his heart was bound up in the happiness of his wife and child — his bright-eyed fearless boy, whom he saw in imagination taking charge of the farm, and cheering his old age, with his respectful, affectionate attention to his comfort and that of his indulgent mother.

At this happy period of his life, the light-hearted farmer might be seen, one clear, cold day in January, harnessing one of his well-fed, high-

spirited horses, into a bright-red sleigh, which was highly ornamented, and had a border of roses painted on it to please the fancy of the little idolized boy, who, with his coat and fur cap on, stood at the sitting-room window, watching his father's motions, with eyes beaming with delight, at the thought of a visit to his grandfather, who lived on the opposite side of the river.

"Come, George, the sleigh is ready," said the smiling young man, as he tied the impatient horse to the great elm, and turned to meet the beautiful child who sprang from his mother's side into the arms of his father, who placed him in the sleigh, and after assisting his "bonny wife" to seat herself, and carefully wrapping the buffalo skins round them, took his station, and, giving the reins to his horse, turned toward the river, which was now a smooth sheet of ice, and so thick that, as the sleigh flew rapidly over it, the horse's feet sounded as though he trod on a solid rock.

To the happy little party every thing looked gay, and the bright, cloudless sky had never seemed so clear, or the sparkling fringes of icicles, which hung on every tree and bush, so dazzling. This was their boy's fifth birthday,

and God in his mercy had preserved him in health and loveliness, while every day gave the fond parents some new proof of his intelligence and affectionate disposition. In their opinion, their child was absolutely perfect, though a less interested person might have said the boy was too daring, — too much disposed to gratify the desire of the present moment, without looking forward to the consequences, — and not sufficiently attentive to his parents' advice, and sometimes their commands. But then he was so fond of his parents, and so grieved when he had offended, that these little defects were overlooked by them.

Their horse flew over the ground so swiftly that, in little more than an hour, they had reached "*the old place*," as they called it, which was ten miles from their residence, and were warmly welcomed by the kind old grandfather and grandmother. After they had taken off their coats and cloaks, the old gentleman called for the TODDY STICK, and mixed a large tumblerful of ARDENT SPIRIT and water, well sweetened with maple sugar, and seasoned with nutmeg. Of this all present partook, and little George ran from one to another, tasting, as each in turn received the tumbler; and lest he should

not have enough, his grandmother made some TODDY *for him*, in a little silver mug, rather sweeter and not quite so strong. * Thus was this child of many hopes, and fond anticipations, early accustomed to associate pleasant recollections with the fatal cup, that was to be to him more deadly than is the blasting poison of the Upas-tree, to the ill-fated ones who are doomed to drink of it.

At a short distance from the house was a rapid river which flowed into the Connecticut, where were assembled a number of boys, eagerly trying their skill in skating. Their appearance was so attractive, as they chased each other over the sparkling ice, now gliding in difficult figures, now darting along in a line, and wheeling at the word of command from their leader, and then advancing in single file, that George, who had been watching them from the window, and shouting and clapping his little hands, as some one of the skaters less skilful than the rest stumbled, or made an awkward motion, which exposed him to the ridicule of the others, came to his father, and looking up in his face, said entreatingly, "Do, dear father, let me go out with the skaters: cousin Charles and Sam are there, and they will

take care of me." His fond mother objected to this, lest he should take cold, or get hurt by the others; but his father, who was always proud of his boy's hardy constitution, and fearless disposition, laughed at the fears of his wife, and saying, "George must learn to be a man," put on his coat and cap, and took him to the boys, who were delighted to receive him, and promised to take care of the merry little fellow, and learn him to skate. Believing that he was safe with his cousins, his father left him and returned to the house, where he found Friend Isaiah Rogers, a Quaker neighbor, seated by the fire.

Friend Rogers was, even in those days, a strong advocate of temperance, and did all in his power to convince people of their error in supposing that a *little* ardent spirit did no harm.

On the present occasion, he was violently opposed in the opinions he expressed, respecting the beneficial effects produced by drinking ardent spirits in cold weather. "I am sure," said old Mr. Allen, "you must acknowledge any one feels the cold less, if he takes a little hot toddy before he goes out to work. I know when I am cutting timber in my wood-lot, if I did not come home once in a while and take some, I should

freeze." "But if thee did not drink at all, thee would not feel cold, John; it is because the rum weakens thy system, that thee must take it often or the first feeling of strength it gives would be gone, leaving thee in a much worse condition than before? I think there are not many men in New England who can bear fatigue and cold better than myself, and I never taste rum."

"I know it," said the old gentleman; "but you never have been accustomed to it, and do not feel the need of it as I do."

"If thee cannot give it up thyself, thee can refuse it to thy children," said the Quaker, taking up the silver mug which had been filled for the little boy. "Should thy child live to be a drunkard, my young friend," turning as he spoke to the happy father, who was seated at the window, watching with parental fondness his little son's fearless movements on the ice, as he followed the skaters,—"should thy child live to be a drunkard, and bring thee broken-hearted to the grave, thee will bitterly repent teaching him to love this poison."

"Do not be concerned, Friend Rogers; my boy will never be hurt by my teaching. He never sees me intoxicated, and he knows I despise

the vice. No, no, my good sir, a man is never injured by *moderate drinking*; and I look on ardent spirit as one of the many good things God has given us to refresh us in our labors; and if some will abuse the use of it, and ruin themselves by it, is that any reason that I should give it up entirely? Some men *eat* so immoderately that they bring on apoplexy; shall I for that reason live on bread and water?"

"Certainly not; because food, though it may be improperly used, was intended for the support of man; but thee cannot say the same of rum: it is not a natural production, but a wicked perversion of some of the gifts of Heaven. It was not known till a few hundred years ago; and it was soon discovered that a small quantity of it would kill an animal, thus proving, beyond doubt, that it is a most fatal poison."

The good Quaker was here interrupted by a wild scream, which rose from the boys on the river, and some of them were seen running to the house, while the others collected in a group, and seemed to be making efforts to break the ice. The young farmer darted out of the house, followed by Friend Rogers. They had not proceeded many steps, before they were met by the

boys, screaming, "George has fallen into a hole in the ice!"—"He is drowning!"—"O come quick, or he will be dead!" The frantic father rushed to the spot where his child was struggling; and finding that he could not reach him, as the current had already borne him some distance under the ice, he dived under it, and was in a few moments so benumbed with cold as to become insensible, and was drawn out by the Quaker, who taking off his coat and putting it round him, directed part of the boys to carry him to the house; and seizing a large pole which lay on the bank, he ran down the river some yards below the place where George had fallen in. He used the pole with such strength and skill that a hole was soon made of sufficient size to admit him; then, fastening a rope, which had been brought by the boys at the first alarm, round his waist, and telling them "to keep a tight hold," he dived into the rapid current. As the boy came by, whirled through the chilling waters, which seemed madly hurrying him on to destruction, the good man succeeded in arresting his progress, and was instantly drawn out of the river by the boys, who gave vent to their joy in loud shouts. But their rejoicing

ceased when they saw that George lay in the arms of the Quaker, apparently lifeless, with closed eyes and drooping head. The icy current had chilled his blood, and his pure spirit seemed to have left its frail though beautiful habitation and returned to the bosom of its Creator.

A change came over the young faces of those who were, a moment before, filling the air with their merry laughter, as they crowded round, with anxious eyes, to look on the hapless boy. Slowly, and sadly, did they bear him to the house, and fearfully did they anticipate the agony of the fond parents, when they should learn that death had taken their only child.

As they entered, they found the father just recovering from his swoon ; for the rescue of the boy had been accomplished in a much shorter time than it has taken to relate it. When he saw his son in the arms of the good man who had risked his own life to save that of the child, he groaned aloud, and in the most frantic manner reproached him for preventing his own attempt to save him, and, in his anguish, exclaimed, " O God, since thou hast taken my child, take me also ! I do not wish to live. What had my boy done, that

he should meet so cruel a death? Why was he taken from me? I wish I had perished with him."

"Be calm," said the Quaker, "and see if thee cannot restore him to life. Perhaps he is not dead; but if he should be, submit to the will of God, and not merit his displeasure by thy angry murmurings against him who gave thy child, and has, perchance, taken him from much temptation and misery in this world, to heaven, where sin and sorrow enter not."

As she heard these words, the young mother eagerly sprang from her kneeling position by the bed, on which George had been laid, and where she had remained holding his little hand, apparently stupefied by the intensity of her grief, unheeding the wild despair of her husband, or the silent tears of her aged parents; and, coming up to Isaiah Rogers, she looked eagerly in his face, and said, in a voice scarcely audible, "Can we do any thing for him? O, if you can tell us any way to bring his spirit back, do it, and God will bless you for ever!"

The good man, though he could not conceal his own emotion, entreated her to restrain her feelings, and he would use all the skill he pos

sessed to restore her dear child to her again. Friend Rogers was a man who had read much, and made a practical use of his knowledge whenever he could do good by it. He had often heard of the means resorted to for the resuscitation of those who have been a long time in the water, and now thought that, as George had been in the water but a few minutes, there was much to hope for, and immediately commenced his exertions to restore animation, by stripping and rubbing him, and using all the means prescribed by physicians in such cases.

Long and anxiously they watched his pallid countenance, but no sign of life appeared. His blue eyes were half closed, his white lips parted, as if to speak, and his bright golden hair hung its profusion of curls, wet with the fatal current which had wrested his life from him, round his beautiful forehead. O, could it be that one so lovely, so innocent, and so cherished, was to be thus rudely snatched away from his fond parents?

His mother kneeled by her first-born, with a countenance so colorless and deathlike, that had it not been for the eager expression of her dark eyes, as they watched the movements of

the Quaker, an observer of this painful scene would have thought she had shared the fate of her boy.

For more than an hour did the benevolent man exert his utmost skill, and make every effort in his power for the restoration of the boy's life; but in vain. No returning breath heaved his little bosom, no intelligence beamed from his closed eyes, and he seemed more like some perfect piece of workmanship, from the hand of the sculptor, than a being who, a few hours before, had been rejoicing in all the gayety of a young and happy heart.

Mournfully the good Quaker turned away, deeply grieved that his exertions should prove ineffectual, when a scream from the mother arrested his attention. He turned, and with feelings which I will not attempt to describe, beheld the object of his anxiety heave a sigh so deep and long drawn, that it seemed as if his bosom would burst in the struggle; and then a shudder which ran over his whole frame, and even shook the bed on which he lay, spoke to the almost breathless spectators the fierceness of the contest between the spirit of life, which was striving to return to its habitation, and the

dread being who seemed unwilling to relax his stern grasp on his beautiful victim. But the king of terrors was soon vanquished, and sullenly retired, leaving the conqueror to send breath through the child's frame, and bid the current of life resume its course.

A deep glow covered his face, as the warm blood came rushing from his beating heart; his blue eyes opened, and, obedient to the first impulse of his affection, he threw his little arms round his mother's neck, and murmured that word, the first the infant learns to lisp,—that word which, in after years, will throw a spell over the sternest spirit,—the sweet name of MOTHER.

At the sound of this endearing word from the lips of her boy, the feelings which had been struggling in her bosom found relief in tears. She clasped her recovered treasure in her arms, and wept.

There is nothing in this wide world so pure, so like heaven, as a mother's love.

The sweet minstrel of Britain thought thus when she said,—

“It is but *pride*, wherewith
To his fair son the *father's* eye doth turn,
Watching his growth. Ay, on the boy he looks
The bright, glad creature springing in his path,
But as the heir of his great name ; the young
And stately tree, whose rising strength ere long
Shall bear his trophies well. And this is love !
This is *man's* love ! What marvel *You ne'er made*
Your breast the pillow of his infancy,
While to the fulness of your heart's glad heavings
His fair cheek rose and fell, and his bright hair
Waved softly to your breath. *You ne'er kept watch*
Beside him till the last pale star had set,
And morn, all dazzling as in triumph, broke
On your dim, weary eye. Not *yours* the face
Which, early faded through fond care for him,
Hung o'er his sleep, and, duly as heaven's light,
Was there to greet his wakening. *You ne'er smoothed*
His couch ; ne'er sung him to his rosy rest ;
Caught his least whisper, when his voice from yours
Had learned soft utterance ; pressed your lip to his
When fever parched it ; hushed his wayward cries
With patient, vigilant, never-wearied love.
No ! these are *woman's* tasks. In these her youth,
And bloom of cheek, and buoyancy of heart,
Steal from her, all unmarked.”

George's mother turned from him to Isaiah Rogers, whose glistening eye and trembling lip showed that, though long accustomed to the command of his feelings, and noted for his habitual

calmness, the Quaker was not insensible to the softening influence of woman's tears, and when the grateful mother took his hand, and said, "Though I cannot find words to express my feelings, I will love you, and pray for you while I have life, and teach my boy to love you. O, if it had not been for you, my child would now be dead, and I should never hear his little voice again. How can I thank you? What can I say?"—she covered her face and wept aloud. The good man could no longer restrain his feelings, and, turning hastily away from her, he went to the window to conceal his tears; but when he had nearly succeeded in calming this unwonted burst of emotion, Mr. Allen, who had been silently holding his son to his breast, as if to assure himself that it was all reality, came to him, and seizing both his hands, said, with a trembling voice, and his whole countenance beaming with gratitude, "God bless you! God bless you! You have saved my son's life; you will have your reward in heaven for this!" He leaned his head upon the window, and, covering his face, gave free vent to his feelings, which were not the less overwhelming, that they had

been so long pent up in his heart, struggling with his stern habit of self-command.

As soon as he could speak, the Quaker said, "Thee dost wrong in thanking me so warmly for the child's life, and not remembering that I was only the instrument in God's hands; that it was He, and not I, who sent breath into the lifeless body, even as when Elijah prayed for the child of the widow. Let us thank him for his goodness to us in blessing our efforts."

The good man then made a fervent prayer; thanking God for his kindness to the now happy circle, and entreating that the child who had been again given to them might be preserved from temptation and sin, when he became a man; that he need not have reason to wish he had been left to find his grave in the river which had so nearly deprived him of life.

The loved one in whose behalf this prayer was offered, lay in his mother's arms, with his earnest face turned toward the Quaker, his blue eyes fixed on his countenance, listening attentively to this pious request for his welfare; and so deep was the impression made on his young mind by the scene, that in after years, when, surrounded by the gay and vicious, he

was raising the sparkling wine-cup to his lips, or with a loud voice and scoffing tone was profanely ridiculing the holy Word of God, or taking his sacred name on his lips, as he sat at the gaming-table, the recollection of the Quaker's prayer would steal over his mind, and the wine was put down untasted, and the oath remained unuttered.

The next morning was bright and cloudless, and the young farmer returned to his home, with his wife and boy, rendered still dearer to them by the perils to which he had recently been exposed.

Mr. Allen belonged to that class denominated good moral people; that is, they committed no crimes, discouraged by their example all gross vices, and attended meeting regularly every Sabbath; but they took no heed of the concerns of the soul, and one would have thought they believed "death to be an eternal sleep," so entirely were they absorbed in the cares of this world, so utterly did they disregard all thought of a future existence.

Feeling and thinking thus, of course their son, who continued to be the one in whom their whole affection centred, as they had no other

children, was educated with reference only to the comfort and happiness to be obtained during the small part of his life which was to be passed on earth, and no provision was made to prepare him for a higher state of existence ; and the consequence was, that as he grew up, with an ardent temperament, an eager thirst for enjoyment, and a disposition which, though he obstinately resisted all opposition to his will, rendered him susceptible of being easily influenced by the artful and designing, who flatter when they intend to destroy, he had no strength to resist temptation.

His father, wishing him to become distinguished as a literary man, and proud of his talents, sent him to a distinguished classical school, at some distance from home, to prepare for college. Here he soon became remarkable for his scholarship, and rapidly rose to the highest rank in the academy, was flattered and caressed by his instructors, his company sought by all the intellectual inhabitants of the town ; and, at the age of eighteen, he returned to his parents with a highly cultivated mind, a daring, speculating, and rather atheistical habit of reasoning on all subjects too high for human understanding, a

most exalted opinion of his own brilliant talents, and, what rendered him more liable to temptation, a remarkably fine face and figure, joined with graceful and polished manners.

After remaining at home a short time he was sent to college, where he passed a strict examination with great honor, and was admitted to the Freshman class.

Thus was he sent forth to commence the tempestuous voyage of life, with no chart to point out the shoals and quicksands on which he might be wrecked, no compass to direct his course, no rudder to his bark, and no instructions as to his destined haven, or even a thought or care whether he should reach one at all.

What wonder then that he was wrecked, and on the very rock which, in the estimation of his father, lay farthest out of his course?

Foolish man! what could he tell of his son's course, when he had given him no principle to guide him, while the siren voice of pleasure was sounding in his ears, pressing him to partake of "the red wine-cup"? In one word, George Allen became intemperate. He was destroyed by the love of ardent spirit, which had been fostered and encouraged in childhood by his mis-

taken parents, who thought they should save their son from the whirlpool of intemperance, most surely, by placing him within the outer circle of its raging waters, that he might become so accustomed to the danger, by being continually under its influence, as to see more clearly the destruction with which it threatened all who approached it.

Alas! the motion was so imperceptible, that he thought not of resisting or escaping, until he found himself in the very centre of the whirling waves, and about to be engulfed forever in the frightful abyss.

Warm-hearted, and fond of gay company, and having plenty of money at his command, he was a fit mark for the unprincipled and vicious, who could bring art and sophistry to aid them in their dark designs on the unsuspecting innocence and confiding frankness of George.

There were in college, when George entered, a number of dissipated young men, who were deeply engaged in the detestable amusement, if it can be so called, of gambling. No sooner did they become acquainted with George Allen, than they formed the design of enticing him to become one of them; and accordingly, with that

cunning which seems to be taught such characters by the prince of darkness, so successful is it, and so well calculated to deceive the unwary, they proceeded cautiously in their diabolical design.

One beautiful evening, about a month after George entered the college, where he was to become the victim of sin, the most debasing in its effects and ruinous in its consequences, as he was sitting in his room, thinking of what might be his future course of life, and full of bright anticipations of future honors and happiness, a member of the junior class, who had been very polite to him, and had already won his friendship by his kind attentions, knocked at his door, and was instantly admitted.

“Good evening, my dear fellow,” said he, affectionately placing his hand on the shoulder of the young stranger; “we thought you would be lonely here, and should be much pleased to have you join a little circle of students in my room. Will you come? they will all be glad to see you. I was very home-sick when I first came here, and can sympathize with you if you are low-spirited.”

Could George have read the *heart* of him who

thus kindly addressed him, he would have seen that under this appearance of friendship was a deep determination to ruin him, if possible, and he would have shunned him as he would a serpent.

But Theodore Weston had a countenance which was calculated most completely to deceive all who were not previously acquainted with his character. So manly and intelligent was the expression, and his bright blue eyes had so much of open-hearted merriment in their glance, that it seemed absolutely cruel to suspect him of any thing wrong.

The evening was passed in conversation, mirth, and song; but nothing was said about cards, for they were desirous to win the confidence of their unsuspecting victim by their apparent desire for his happiness and improvement, and therefore confined their conversation principally to such topics as would be most likely to interest him, and talked over the more intricate studies to which he was attending, giving him all the assistance which their superior knowledge enabled them to afford, and flattering him by their attention to his opinions, and a hearty laugh at his witticisms, so that

when, at a late hour, he returned to his room, after receiving an earnest invitation to repeat his visit whenever it might be convenient, both parties were highly pleased at the result of the invitation. George Allen was gratified by their kindness and politeness toward him, and they in turn were rejoiced that they had so far succeeded in their design.

The acquaintance thus formed soon ripened into intimacy; and before many weeks had elapsed, the young Freshman had been initiated by his new friends into all the mysteries of the gaming-table; yet so perfectly did they conceal their real motives from him, that he saw no deeper design in their fondness for his society, and frequent invitations to a social party at cards, than a good-natured wish to amuse him; and, flattered by the attentions and apparent friendship of one so distinguished in his class, and admired for his superior talents, he yielded to the influence which Theodore Weston insensibly exerted over him. And while he would have indignantly repulsed a bolder temper, his principles, based as they were on nothing firmer than vague ideas of virtue and morality, melted away before the fascinating and ingenious sophis-

try of one whose mind had long been tainted with infidelity, and who, with that unaccountable eagerness to deprive others of their faith in all which may preserve them from temptation and vice, which is always manifested by unprincipled men, spared no pains to present his atheistical doctrines in their least revolting aspect, and to clothe the most impious assertions in so attractive a dress, that his victim, bewildered by his eloquence, and delighted with the vivid coloring his fancy threw over every subject which he touched, was scarcely aware that all those opinions which he held sacred had been attacked by the accomplished infidel; and it was not until called upon to decide a question of duty that the effect became apparent, and he almost wondered at his altered sentiments on a subject he before regarded in so different a light.

It was now that the lurking taste for ardent spirit, which had been created in childhood, and fostered in his riper years, by those who should have guarded him from temptation, and kept his inclinations pure, and his mind fortified by religion and principle, rose up in its hitherto unheeded strength, to aid in the attempt, already too successful, to ruin him. When once con-

vinced by his friend Theodore, that man was formed for pleasure, that no action could be sinful which did not injure another, and that, in gratifying every desire, we were only obeying the dictates of the feelings implanted within us by God himself, to promote our happiness, and make this world a scene of enjoyment, while the gloomy doctrines taught in the Bible were invented by a sect of stern misanthropes, who, enraged at the sight of happiness they would not partake, determined to poison the sparkling cup of pleasure, by doubts, and restrain mankind by rigid rules, and intimidate them by threats of future punishment, in order to make them miserable as themselves,—he indulged his love for the wine-cup without hesitation, and frequently called forth a reproof from his tutors, for his increasing habits of dissipation, his gradual distastes for his studies, and his disregard for college rules.

More than a year had elapsed since George Allen quitted his peaceful home, to face, untried and unarmed, the formidable assault of college dissipation, when, one evening, Theodore Weston, who had now become his most frequent associate, came to his room in high spirits, and

apparently much pleased with some idea which had just suggested itself to him.

Coming up to George, he exclaimed, "I have a glorious plan in my head, and I want your assistance to enable me to put it in practice."

"But I must know what it is before I promise."

"Well, then, listen, and you shall know; I want to get up a supper frolic, and you and I will go round among the students and see who will join us."

"What sort of a supper frolic do you mean, Weston?" said George; who, though he had drank deeply of dissipation, had never yet been engaged in any of the minor acts of insubordination in which students take such delight.

"Why, the *best sort*, to be sure," was the reply of his tempter. "One of us will just step over to farmer Dodge's hen-roost and get some provisions, and we can all meet in my room just after dark. We will have a splendid evening, and if any of the tutors should happen to hear of it we can stand by each other, you know, and then there will be no witnesses against us. Come, don't look so grave; there is not the least danger of being found out, for I know perfectly well how to manage the affair; I have done such things many a time,"

"I would rather not join you," said George; I have had enough of dissipation, and mean to reform."

"Well done! George, who would have expected this from you? A frolic is not dissipation, my dear fellow. I hope you are not relapsing into the stupid way of thinking, from which we tried so hard to arouse you, just after you came among us; why, you have just learned to act like a man, and it would be a great pity to turn into a boy again."

"I would rather be a boy again, Theodore, if I could be as happy as I was then"

"Why, Allen," said his pretended friend, "what fiend, in the name of all that is merry, has taken possession of you? You look like 'patience on a monument' eating grindstones; have you been reading the Lamentations of Jeremiah; or has some old musty sermon found its way into your room?"

"Neither; but I don't feel like a frolic."

"O, well, we will wait till you do, for there would be no fun without you; only I hope you have not become a disciple of Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher, or, what is still more absurd of that stupid book called the Holy

Bible — holy, indeed, it is, and a great deal too much so to suit me; the Koran, with all its absurdities, would be a far more reasonable rule of conduct; and, to say the truth, I should like Mahomet's heaven very well for a future residence, if he did not make his houries of musk, for I am not partial to that perfume."

Theodore had always found that ridicule had a much more powerful effect upon the mind of George, than argument or persuasion; he therefore exerted himself on this occasion to overcome, by means of these weapons, the feelings of self-reproach, and half-formed resolutions of amendment, which he had discovered in him for several days past, and at length prevailed on him to promise that he would be one of the proposed party.

Having succeeded thus far in his wishes, Theodore Weston left the room of his young fellow-student, exulting in his victory.

As soon as he was gone, George seated himself by a window, which commanded a beautiful prospect; and, leaning his head on his hand, appeared to be lost in contemplation of the lovely scene before him. But other and sadder thoughts mingled with his admiration, as he

looked on the sparkling river which wound its way through the valley, reflecting the rays of the setting sun, as he shed his golden light over the bright autumnal landscape, imparting a warm tint to the scarlet and brown foliage of the maple and beech, and making the dark green of the pine and hemlock look still darker by the contrast.

The view of the dark-blue river brought to his recollection an almost-forgotten scene of his childhood; and he recalled the sensations which filled his breast, when, but a moment before rescued from the arms of death, he lay on his mother's bosom, and listened to the prayer of the benevolent man who had risked his own life to save him.

He distinctly remembered the expression of the good Quaker's countenance, as he earnestly entreated that God, who had restored the child to his parents, would never forsake him, but would preserve him from temptation and sin in his youth, and never suffer him to forget the omnipotent Being who had so mercifully protected him.

He felt that had any attempt been made by his parents to strengthen the impression then

made on his infant mind ; had they endeavored to lead his thoughts to God, and teach him to regulate his conduct by motives of duty ; to consult his conscience and his Bible, whenever a doubt respecting the propriety of any action arose, he might now have been a very different character.

But with these feelings, which were suggestions of the faithful monitor, given to all, that they may not sin ignorantly, were mingled others of a far different stamp.

The poison of the infidel principles which had been presented to his inquiring mind, to oppose its eager, restless search after truth, now plainly manifested the venom with which they were so deeply imbued, and even his purest and best affections could not overcome their influence.

Even the good old Quaker, after the first glow of grateful emotion had subsided, appeared to him, in the light which the baleful meteor of philosophy and human reason shed over every object, to have been either a hypocrite, or, what his feelings more readily admitted, a good but ignorant and deluded old man, who, in the simplicity of his heart, received as truth what the more artful and designing taught the uneducated.

He could not but think, however, that Friend Rogers was far happier in his ignorance and delusion than he was himself, with all his superior knowledge ; and he was more than half inclined to wish that he had never read Voltaire, and that less refined though not less dangerous infidel, Thomas Paine ; since his exalted views of the greatness of human intellect and the noble powers of man's reason, when unfettered by superstition, had been dearly purchased in exchange for his peace of mind.

I do not think any one is ever suffered to remain in such utter mental darkness as to discern no difference between virtue and vice, or rather holiness and sin ; therefore, though George Allen had never received any religious instruction, nor been taught to look to any higher tribunal than an earthly one for approbation or censure, he was conscious that even could his conduct during the past year bear the strictest scrutiny, from all for whose good opinion he felt anxious, still there would be a something wanting, without which he could not be happy.

His pride would not suffer him to ask assistance and direction from Him who could say to

the tempest, "Peace, be still," and all other sources were insufficient to calm his troubled soul.

Could parents only know to how much bitter suffering and how many agonizing struggles they expose the ardent, warm-hearted youth who has just left the home of his childhood, before his heart becomes chilled by skepticism, and hardened by constant intercourse with vice, they would not surely send him forth into this world of crime and unbelief, without a knowledge of our holy, happy religion, to keep him from too rude a collision with the stern, heaven-daring leaders in rebellion to God, who are almost sure to shatter, if not destroy, the outworks of *moral principles*, if not guarded by stronger and more active sentinels than are usually found upon them, and obtain an easy victory over the good resolutions within the citadel of man's heart.

George Allen was made very unhappy by the train of thought which had presented itself to him, and would have given any thing to be set free from the fascinating influence which Theodore Weston had acquired over him; but he had not sufficient moral courage to brave his

ridicule by at once renouncing his society, and determining to act for himself independently and virtuously; still the struggle in his mind was long and severe, and might have terminated favorably, had he not been suddenly aroused from his reverie by the sound of music under his front window. George was excessively fond of music, and played on the flute with much skill; he could not therefore resist an invitation from several of the students who were collected in the college yard, with various wind-instruments, to come with his flute and join them.

Glad to escape from his own thoughts, he complied, and was told they intended to serenade a beautiful young lady, who lived near. George went with the serenaders, and returned about nine, as the moon was shining brightly, and every thing seemed so lovely that his sad feelings had taken flight before he reached home; and he had agreed to meet with the supper party, the next Tuesday evening.

It was a cold, rainy evening in November, when these mischief-loving students met in Theodore Weston's room, to enjoy "the feast of turkey and the flow of wine." It was deemed essential that, as the meeting was a

stolen one, the poultry and other requisites should be stolen likewise, or obtained in some underhand manner. One of the boldest had, therefore, the night before, contrived to get access to a neighboring farm-yard, and taken and slain a turkey and two chickens; the other eatables were furnished by the different partakers in this riotous proceeding.

The shutters were closed, the door locked; and the young countenances, sparkling with merriment, — enjoyed with a keener appetite because it was forbidden, — formed a striking contrast to the cheerless scene without; while the dashing of rain against the windows, the creaking of the old elms, and the occasional gusts of wind, which shook the building and roared down the chimney, all passed unnoticed and unheard, amid the occasional bursts of laughter which attended their awkward attempts at getting supper. An immense fire was blazing in the chimney, before which were the unfortunate fowls, whose lives had been sacrificed for the celebration of this feast of Bacchus, spitted on an old sword, which was put across two chairs, while one of the students was officiating as cook, with a plate of butter and a spoon, basting as he turned them

round. His uneasy movements plainly indicated his dislike to his station; and, at length, his impatience vented itself in an eloquent appeal to his companions, which made the room ring with a shout of laughter so loud, that it startled those who caused it. "I say, boys, I wish one of you would turn and grease these confounded chickens; I am almost roasted, and the wool is all singed off my pantaloons. Dame Nature never intended me for a turnspit, I know." "Yes, she did," said one of his merciless friends, "only you never obeyed her dictates, and now she is making you suffer for it."

"You must earn your supper before you eat it," said another. "I'll be hanged, if you see any thing left of me by the time it is done, for my brains are all scorched up now," responded the despairing cook. "Well, you do look a *little warm* in the face," said Theodore Weston; "I will see to the fowls a while, and if you want to cool yourself, you may go down to the yard and bring me the top rail of the fence,—I loosened it to-day, for fear we should want it,—for Dick Wilson rolled my last log down stairs last night, after poor little Freshman Tom."

"Yes," said Dick; "and I wish you could

have seen the coward run, and heard him bawl when he heard it thundering down, he made such a racket, that one of the tutors came out of his room to see what ailed him; and when he saw the poor boy standing and trembling beside the log, he couldn't help laughing."

The young gentleman who had such an aversion to being cooked, now took his cap and departed in search of fuel, and soon returned with a rail about eight feet in length.

"There," said he, throwing it down; "the next time you catch me stealing rails, you may tar and feather me."

"Why, what has happened?" said half a dozen voices.

"Happened! nothing; but something almost did. As I was coming up stairs, I heard one of the doors in the entry above, open, and who should come along but our old Latin tutor; I knew him by his creaking shoes. I felt as though I should go through the wall; but, as good luck would have it, he did not bring a light with him, and you see I am not as large as Falstaff, so I shouldered my rail, stood up close to the wall, and held my breath till he got by. If he had put out his hand, he would have found me out and then I should have cut a pretty figure."

‘O well, don’t be frightened, now it’s all over; but I should like to have seen you; such a long fellow as you are, shrinking into your coat, with this hugged up in your arms,—you must have looked like that great, tall corporal, that trains with his wife’s clothes-pole.’

“Here, Allen,” said Theodore, “just take this hatchet, and split up this said rail, for my fire is going down.”

After various difficulties, and no little vexation, the supper was pronounced cooked; the fowls, nicely browned, were put upon a tin pan, for want of a dish; the potatoes and onions (for this affair was conducted in style) were duly arranged on the table, and Theodore Weston, going to the closet, brought out six bottles, saying, “I thought we must have something to wash down the victuals, so I got Sam Brown, the tavern keeper’s son, to bring me half-a-dozen bottles of real, sparkling champagne—see how bright it is,” he added, pouring out a glass. “Huzza!” exclaimed the merry students, as they drew their chairs round the table, when suddenly a heavy footstep was heard approaching.

“The old Harry!” said one, “here comes old

D——, to see what we are doing. I suppose he found some of the rooms empty, and the suspicious old fool has come hunting round, to find out what we are about.”

“What shall we do?” said another.

“Do!” said Weston; “why, hide the things as fast as we can, instead of standing like a parcel of frightened geese; and when he gets here, we shall be as grave as deacons.”

“Here, Jackson, take this turkey and clap it into the closet—quick! shut the door; put the vegetables into that box; they will be none the worse for it.”

His directions were obeyed in less time than it had taken to give them, and all the materials for the feast were put out of the way just as the tutor reached the door.

“Deuce take him,” said Mr. Brooks, one of the students, who was noted for his love of good eating; “the supper will be cold before he will go.”

The loud knock was answered by George Allen, who went to the door, while Theodore Weston hastily caught up a pile of books, and throwing them on the table, seated himself gravely by it. “Good evening, young gentlemen,” said

Mr. D. politely ; " I thought I heard a great noise up here ; did you notice it, any of you ? "

" I heard some cats in the garret, sir ; and we have been laughing at a discussion between Mr. Brooks and myself respecting the comparative merits of animal and vegetable diet. He asserts that the mind is more vigorous when the appetite is not indulged to excess, but merely satisfied, and that a vegetable diet is very beneficial."

Poor Mr. Brooks looked rather disconcerted at this unexpected assertion of Theodore, which was well known by all the students to be far from the truth ; and his confusion increased when the old gentleman, who never suspected any one of what students term " quizzing," turned to him, and very gravely said, he wished all young gentlemen would agree with him ; and he presumed Mr. Brooks's superior scholarship might be attributed in a great measure to his abstemiousness.

How long the laughter-loving students might have been able to preserve their gravity, cannot be decided ; for a crash in the closet, like that of breaking glass, attracted their attention, and consternation was depicted on many countenances, when they saw a stream of their valued

champagne issue from the crack at the bottom of the closet-door, and make its way across the floor in front of Mr. D., who, looking at it rather suspiciously, asked Theodore what he had in his closet.

Without appearing at all disturbed, Weston went to the closet, and produced the fragments of a bottle, saying, "It is a bottle of vinegar that was hanging up, I suppose the string was worn out or rotten." The old tutor looked round as though he did not clearly understand the expression of their faces, but being, as was remarked, very slow to comprehend any thing a little mysterious, his untiring vigilance and strict discipline were of little avail, for the wary students generally succeeded in eluding his watchfulness.

On the present occasion, seeing nothing that would justify the reproof he had intended to administer, he took his leave, after expressing his conviction, that "young gentlemen generally studied to greater advantage when alone."

As soon as the door was closed behind him and the sound of his retreating footsteps died away, the revellers again betook themselves to fun and frolic.

"Huzza for Weston!" said one; "he is the

fellow to get out of a scrape handsomely ; why, the ——, how could you look so unmoved when that confounded champagne jumped off the shelf, and came raving out under the closet door, like a spirit of mischief ? I felt as though the very supper had turned state's evidence, and expected to see the turkey make its appearance next, on its drum-sticks, crying out for revenge ; and old D. looked as suspicious as the Old Harry."

This speech was received with a loud laugh by all but Brooks, who said, "Come, come, Edwards, what an everlasting talker you are ; the supper will be as cold as a frozen whale, before you have finished your oration ; do let us go about it, or we shall have no time for fun."

"Well done, Brooks ; you are in a great hurry to get rid of the new character I gave you ; I should think you might wear it a little while for variety's sake."

"However, we may as well re-set our suppertable and despatch the provisions, for fear of more interruptions."

Away went Brooks to the closet in search of the turkey ; and as soon as he had found it, for it had been thrust in without a previous inspec-

tion of the premises, he vociferated, "What stupid fool put away this turkey?"

"Why, what ails you, Epicurus? you look as if you had received orders to fast seven weeks," said Theodore.

"Ails me! nothing; but something ails the turkey."

"What is it, what is it?" said they all; "bring it here." A general rush was made to the closet, where Mr. Brooks stood contemplating the unfortunate fowl, and it was brought forth to the light.

As soon as they saw the condition of their stolen prey, a burst of laughter arose from the whole company; even poor Mr. Brooks could not resist the influence of their merriment.

"What in the name of common sense is the matter with it?" said one.

"Poor thing," said another; "I should think it had the black plague."

"I can solve the mystery," said Theodore Weston, who had been to the closet to examine the turkey's hiding-place; "while I was taking care of the wine, I told Jackson to put the fowls into that other closet, and he, like a scatter-brained dunce as he is, stuck the dish into my tin

pan of charcoal ; the poultry took the liberty of slipping out of the dish into the coal ; so you see, gentlemen, your supper is ready seasoned for you."

"Never mind," said George Allen, who could scarcely speak for laughing, "scrape off the outside ; the rest is as good as ever."

"Ay, so we can, Allen," said Theodore, and set himself to work to repair the damage, while his assistant cooks busied themselves in bringing the other articles of food, and the supper was announced.

"Now, gentlemen," said their host, "let us eat, drink, and be merry ; we have Scripture warrant for that. Your health, Mr. Brooks. The champagne is not seasoned with carbon, if the turkey is."

The clock struck ten, and still they were at the table ; and, as glass after glass was drained, the fascinating poison began to take effect, and songs were sung and profane jests went round, and the loudest laugh and deepest oath were uttered by George Allen ; for he had drank and laughed until all serious feelings had fled ; and though a few days before he had seen the wickedness of his own heart, and almost resolved to

renounce his dissipated life and study the Word of God for himself, to see if he could answer the sophistry of Weston, with the merriment of this evening passed away all that was good or holy from his young mind, and ever after he went on in his mad career without one warning from his conscience; the emotions once awakened in his breast had been chilled, and slept forever. Conscience once slighted, and penitent feelings repressed, may be stilled until the day of final retribution, when will be heard the voice of the Omnipotent, saying to the trembling, self-convicted sinner these terrible words: "Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not."

From that evening George Allen resigned himself without resistance to the influence of his dissolute companions, and seemed to yield his last spark of moral rectitude to the withering grasp of the fiend intemperance, who wrested it from him without his making one struggle in its defence. As his habits of dissipation increased, he of course lost his love of study, and was frequently warned by the officers of the college that expulsion must inevitably follow such total disregard of all rules, or even respect for common morality.

At first, a fear of public disgrace restrained him, for he was very ambitious, and had long looked forward to the hope of attaining to eminence in a profession; and visions of future honor and public preferment had flitted before his mind's eye, until he had resolved that nothing less than the highest summit of distinction should satisfy his aspiring mind.

He had fancied himself pleading at the bar with the fascinating eloquence of Wirt, and the overpowering, resistless force of the gifted Webster. But, alas! love of duty, and high, noble, manly resolutions, vanish like morning mists before the fierce noonday heat of intemperance.

All hope of distinction or fear of dishonor fled from the imagination of the unprincipled infidel, for such was George Allen, after a few months of indulgence in unbridled sensuality.

So rapid was his progress in vice, and so shameless were his violations of good order and morality, that, in less than six months after the students' frolic, he was, after repeated expostulations from his tutors, expelled from that college where he had formerly distinguished himself by his talents, and excited the expectation, destined

never to be realized, that he would one day be its brightest ornament.

Long and fruitlessly had those interested in him endeavored to convince him of the folly and wickedness of his course. Vain effort! He well knew the certain ruin of character, constitution, and every thing valuable, to which his conduct must tend; he did not sin in ignorance; the fault was not in his head, but in his heart, which was utterly polluted and vile. Cherished sin had made him reckless, and he cared not for the consequences, so long as he might indulge his evil passions unchecked.

The evening after his sentence had been pronounced, George was walking in a grove near the college, when he overheard a conversation between him who had sought so eagerly to ruin his unsuspecting young friend, and Jackson; a warm feeling though dissipated young man.

"I am really sorry for Allen," said he to Theodore; "it is a pity a fellow of such fine talents should be so utterly ruined."

"I do not think he deserves pity," was the reply; "if he had only had sense enough to be moderate in his pleasures, and had not given

nimself up so entirely and openly, he would have escaped this disgrace."

"If he had not been so tempted," said Jackson, warmly, "he might have left us as honorable and upright in morals, as intellectual, and as ardently devoted to study, as he was when he came among us."

"You are quite a Don Quixote," said Weston, contemptuously, "and would be quite as ready, I doubt not, to fight windmills; but I doubt whether your disinterestedness would ever be brought into practice sufficiently to benefit any one. You are very good in theory, Jack, but you don't *act* any more righteously than I do."

"I never tried so hard to ruin an inexperienced, confiding boy, like George Allen; my wickedness hurts no one but myself; but you, Weston," continued he, indignantly, "used all your influence to overturn every good feeling in his heart. I never understood you, till that night we had such a frolic; I always thought you really liked him, but I suspected you when you tried so hard to get him intoxicated, and then suffered him to beat you at the first game of whist, to induce him to play again;

I tell you, Weston," said he, while his dark eyes flashed, "you have acted more like a fiend than a man; and I call Heaven to witness that I renounce from this moment all friendship with you."

George stood in a little arbor, formed by a luxuriant wild grape-vine, which the students had trained over the lower branches of an oak, and the two students had approached him, and as Jackson uttered the last sentence, they stopped so near, that the expression of their faces was easily discernible.

He was startled by the sudden change which passed over Theodore Weston's countenance, as he listened to the accusation of his companion.

His bright, blue eyes grew dark with rage and scorn; his brow became black with unutterable thoughts; and his cheek was pale as death, while, with a curling lip, he answered,—

"To *you*, Jackson, I am not responsible for my conduct. I am not to blame for Allen's want of firmness; he was at liberty to do as he chose; and as he has shown himself entirely devoid of resolution or common sense, and unable to do any thing like a man, he must bear

the consequences—I have no interest in the fellow.”

“No interest in him! O, Theodore, I could not have believed you had so little feeling. I tell you, and you will not silence me by frowning, that you have been the ruin of Allen, and at the day of judgment you will receive your recompense; and I am determined,” he continued, proudly, “to listen to your fascinating infidelity no longer; I have yielded to the charmed spell with which your wit and eloquence have bound me, until my soul is nearly ruined, and now I *will act* for myself, and atone to God, if I can, for my past wickedness.”

“Really, parson,” said the cold-hearted infidel, “I wonder where you learned so much holiness; you would make a fine Methodist ranter; pray, how long since you *met with a change?*” he added, sneeringly.

“I have a pious mother, Weston; and before I came *here* I never dared to scoff at sacred things; it would break her heart to hear of my daring, blasphemous conduct for the past year. She gave me a Bible when I left home, and I promised to read it, and kept my promise, till I

became acquainted with the set of which *you* are the leader."

As his companion uttered this sentence, Theodore's color came and went, and his lip trembled as if with strong emotion; for he, too, once had a pious mother, who died when he was about eight years old; and his imagination recalled the scene of her death-bed; he remembered her last kiss; and the sound of her soft voice, as she implored the protection of God for her child, still echoed in his ear. Poor Theodore, unfortunately, had an unprincipled father, whose example overcame the good impressions which his mother had given. But he had not always been happy; there were many moments when memory and conscience strove to recall his wandering steps; and he had invariably silenced their murmurs by plunging madly into company, and lately they had ceased to trouble him; but now, as he looked on the young man who had so fearlessly acknowledged his love for his mother, and faith in his God, he would have given worlds to exchange his proud philosophy for a happier belief.

It was but a momentary feeling; he struggled against it with all his might; the image of his

dying mother faded from his imagination, and he was again the proud, unfeeling infidel. Turning calmly to Jackson, he said, with an insulting smile, as every trace of softer emotion disappeared from his features, "Heaven is very much interested in your thoughts and feelings, I dare say; much more so than I am; and now, if you have expended your chivalric indignation, and called me all the hard names you intend to, we will, if you please, return to our rooms; and I advise you to let George Allen fight his own duels in future; you will get no thanks for interfering."

His young companion turned indignantly from him, and saying, "We are friends no longer," returned hastily to the college.

Theodore Weston looked after him and muttered, "A fine fellow that, and worth a dozen Allens. But ne is so fettered by *superstition*," he added, and then hastened to a large party, where he soon lost all thoughts of his last conversation in mirth and dancing.

It would be difficult to describe the feelings of George as he listened to this conversation of the collegians. Anger, astonishment, and detestation, were the most powerful emotions.

The veil was rent which had until now hid the base intentions of his perfidious friend from his eyes, and he saw how completely he had been made the dupe of a heartless, designing villain.

Mortified and enraged, he returned to his lodgings, and the next day bid farewell to the scene of his disgrace, but not to return home; no, he was too proud for that. He could not meet his father's reproaches, or his gentle mother's tears of bitter anguish. Besides, he felt a consciousness that had his education been more carefully conducted, had his parents taught him good principles, and learned him to love and fear his Creator; had his mother been like Jackson's, he might have escaped these temptations; and he felt a kind of sullen recklessness as to his future fate, and a savage exultation in the thought that the deeper his degradation, the keener would be his parents' anguish; he wished them to feel the effects of their carelessness respecting his soul. He had always known that there was as much of pride as affection in his father's feelings toward him, and he now determined that he should not be gratified by seeing his son distinguished for his learning and talents.

Strange ! that a year of dissipation and intemperance should have chilled his best feelings, destroyed all high and honorable ambition, and rendered him so entirely a slave to the most debasing passions

But daily observation convinces that this is not an exaggerated picture ; vice is sufficiently overwhelming to sweep away all the better part of our nature ; ever more ready to yield to the suggestions of evil than good.

The only desire this unfortunate young man now had, was to go as far as possible from all who had ever known him. He therefore went to New York, intending to apply for a situation as clerk in some commercial establishment, but meeting there with a young lawyer with whom he had formerly been acquainted, who was about to sail for New Orleans, George was persuaded to accompany him to that polluted city.

During their voyage, which was remarkably pleasant, Mr. Lyman, which was the name of the young lawyer, described the state of society in New Orleans, and the many temptations which would assail him there ; adding, that, firmly established as his own principles were, by an excellent education, and the constant care

of pious parents, he should not have dared to expose his untried virtue to the fiery ordeal, but for the promised protection and advice of an uncle residing there, an elderly man with a large family, who had removed from Boston about five years before.

Mr. Lyman had only known George Allen when at the Academy, before he had breathed the tainted atmosphere of dissipation, and was not aware of the entire change in his character.

Separated from those whose example had been so injurious, and in a situation so novel to him, with one who detested every thing vicious and disgraceful, surrounded by no temptations, breathing the pure air of the ocean,

All around him one deep sea,
All above him one blue sky,

he trod the deck of the swift-sailing vessel with renewed life ; and those who had only seen him after one of his college revels, would hardly have recognized in the being who, with buoyant step and blooming countenance, walked rapidly from one end to the other of the rolling ship as she bounded over the foaming waves, the pale, languid student, listlessly poring over his books

with an aching head, wearied with excess, and yet unable to refrain from what he termed pleasure.

But this seeming reformation was only the natural flow of youthful vivacity, attendant on perfect health, not the enduring and thorough reformation of the mind, which would insure future good conduct.

The most dangerous frailty in George Allen's disposition was a want of firmness. His character, chameleon-like, took the hue of that which it came in contact with; always, however, like all who have not felt the purifying influence of religion, more readily assuming the dark tint of unlawful indulgence than the bright coloring of virtue.

When arrived in New Orleans, Mr. Lyman went immediately to his uncle's, and George accompanied him. They found Mr. Reynolds had lost none of his Yankee warmth of heart; for New England's sons and daughters do love their friends ardently, and what is still better, sincerely, and do not deserve the *high eulogium* bestowed on them by a modern traveller, who said, in the height of his politeness, "Nature has furnished the Yankee with double brains and

but half a heart." Mr. Lyman was to board with his uncle, but he very kindly conducted George to a boarding-house, where he found several young gentlemen who had recently left the Northern States, some for their health, to spend the approaching winter out of the reach of our piercing winds, and some, the greater part, actuated by that spirit of enterprise so common among us.

The next morning the new friends walked out with Mr. Reynolds to view the city, and see if a situation could be got for George, who had won the good opinion of his acquaintances by his intelligence and agreeable manners.

Northern intelligence and integrity are duly appreciated by our Southern brethren, and young men of education can always obtain a generous compensation for their services. George, therefore, found no difficulty in establishing himself as clerk in one of the principal banks, with a salary far beyond his expectations.

Thus advantageously situated, out of the reach of all his former associates, his late bad conduct unknown, introduced by Lyman to all the best society in the extensive circle of his uncle's acquaintance, George Allen seemed for a time

to have relinquished his dissolute pleasures, and his good habits acquired additional strength from a new motive, as though Heaven would in mercy hold out every possible inducement to win him back to the path of moral rectitude.

One of the families to which his young friend introduced him was that of a physician, a native of Vermont, who had resided in New Orleans for several years. This gentleman was a man of superior talents, and was highly pleased with the young strangers, especially Allen, whose fine mind was not yet dimmed by vice, but seldom failed to prepossess in his favor all who knew the worth of intellect.

It was in this family circle that George found his highest pleasures. There were several children, all distinguished for amiable dispositions and affection for each other. The eldest was a very accomplished and pious young lady of eighteen, whose modest and gentle appearance interested George at his first acquaintance with her; and when, as he became more intimate, he found that she was as intellectual as she was amiable, he thought her superior to any other female he had ever seen, as he could converse with her on subjects which interested him with

out feeling obliged, as is too often the case, to lay aside all intellectual conversation, and talk in that trifling manner generally supposed by gentlemen to be most intelligible and interesting to ladies.

Respect and esteem for one so lovely, cherished by a mind so ardent in all its emotions, soon gave birth to warmer feelings, and young Allen became deeply attached to one who evidently knew how to appreciate his attainments.

As his character stood fair in the estimation of all who knew him, and his morals were not suspected, the young lady's parents were much pleased with his frank avowal of affection for their daughter.

George well knew that, if she even suspected his infidel, dissolute principles, her heart would be no longer his; and, as he really loved her, he thought an entire abandonment of his former pleasures would be more than repaid by the possession of such a prize. For some months, therefore, he refrained from all dissipation, and was far happier than he had been since he left home. But actuated by no higher motive than the attainment of earthly good, his principles unchanged, when he was no longer in doubt that

Adelaide loved him, and the first excitement of a new and absorbing passion had softened into a more rational and subdued feeling, the restraint became irksome.

He felt a restless and insatiable desire to resume his forsaken pursuits, and readily yielded to the solicitations of a young planter of polished manners, but abandoned character, with whom he was slightly acquainted, to accompany him to the theatre, to admire the grace and beauty of a French opera dancer, who was to make her *début* that evening.

George had never before been to a theatre; for since he came to New Orleans he had not associated with any who approved of this fascinating but dangerous place of amusement.

Those who have frequented this *fashionable* place of resort, may imagine the wonder and admiration of so susceptible and excitable a mind as George Allen's. He was excessively fond of music, and the orchestra was very good; and when the full burst of melody in a splendid overture arose from every instrument, and filled the house with the thrilling strains, then died away in tones softer than an *Æolian* harp, now swelling into a rich, animating strain, then again

fading into low, mellow notes, while from the midst of the gently murmuring sounds broke forth a silvery tone, seeming to come nearer and nearer the entranced listener, and float around him, sweet as the voice of the fabled siren, and too much resembling her soul-enraving song,—when George listened in breathless silence to this exquisite music, he thought he had never heard any thing so delightful, and he determined to partake of this amusement as often as possible.

He thought no objection could be made to its morality, as the theatre was patronized by many persons whose virtue was unquestioned by the most rigid; not considering that the indirect influence upon the imagination was far more ruinous than the most shameless profligacy, as it corrupted the taste, and familiarized the heart with mimic vice and splendid villany, only to make ready the soil for the debasing reality.

No one who has ever witnessed so disgusting an exhibition as the highly-applauded feats of a female opera-dancer, need be told of their indelicacy. The very profession, in itself, assures every mind possessing the least moral principle, that no female of modesty, nay, no woman,

(shame, that woman's name should be so degraded!) who was not utterly depraved, would place herself in such a situation.

No wonder that the most admired, because most shameless, of this class have been imported from France — that nursery-garden where the rank weeds of infidelity and vice have been so assiduously cultivated, nourished with blood, and warmed by fire, under the fostering care of men who deserve to be prime ministers in Pandemonium, to reward their success in ruining souls.

Those who personated the *Goddess of Liberty*, and danced round the *Liberty Tree* of Robespierre, were no doubt efficient teachers in this sublime art.

From the theatre, the transition was easy to a gambling-house or *hell*, as these establishments are expressively termed in Europe — giving the name of the citadel to one of its principal gates.

Wine was, of course, an attendant at these places, and, the Circean cup once tasted, George found the spell stronger than ever; and on he went, half-bewildered by the variety and novelty of the forms in which temptation assailed him in

this profligate city, so much more alluring than the common dissipations in which he had indulged in college; and he quaffed long, deep draughts of sensuality, in every form which may be found in large cities, exulting in the thought that here he might sin without fear of detection from those whose good opinion he was anxious to preserve.

But affection is ever jealous, and the watchful eye of Adelaide was not slow to detect a change in her lover. She saw that, although he expressed much affection for her, he was not so often with her, and seemed uneasy in her company, especially if any remark was made on the low tone of morality among the young in the city.

She dreaded lest George had been led into bad company, and firmly resolved, if she found it to be the truth, she would immediately renounce him, though she felt the struggle between duty and affection would be severe.

George Allen did not intend, when he went to the theatre, to go any further; but his mind was enervated by the music, and still more by the dancing of the very beautiful, bewitching actress, who had attracted so many; and when

he was solicited to accompany his companion still further in the broad way, he had not firmness enough to resist him. But even now he intended to reform when he should be married;—he thought he could stop when he pleased.

One beautiful day, his new acquaintance, the planter, invited him to visit his estate, which was a few miles out of the city. He readily consented, and obtained leave of his employers to take the excursion.

It was charming weather, and the negroes were busily at work; it being the sugar season, when all the slaves are *worked* as far as their strength will allow, and sometimes beyond their powers, because the extra work he can extort is of more value to the owner, at this season, than the future health or even life of a slave; and if he loses a few, in consequence of overwork, as he is thereby enabled to get his produce into the market sooner than others, he is amply repaid for their loss.

As the two young men wandered over the plantation, which was a remarkably productive one, George could not help contrasting the scene with the fine farms in New England, where all before him gives the passing traveller an idea of

the substantial comfort and plenty which reigned within the homely but hospitable farm-house. Here no object relieved the sameness of the wide plantations but a few wretched-looking huts, too miserable in appearance to afford shelter to cattle; and instead of the well-fed, contented-looking horses and oxen of our happy farmers, the oppressed, mourning, hopeless Africans—the *human cattle* of the south—were every where bending over their work, degraded and debased in soul and body, condemned to a weary life of slavery, unpitied and despised while on earth, and with no knowledge of future happiness, to brighten with the radiance of hope their dying hour.

Nor is the *degradation* of the hapless negro his only sorrow, though sufficient of itself to take away all real happiness.

In one of the fields George and his friend passed through was a group of women and children at work, under the care of an overseer, a fierce and brutal-looking man, who seemed to delight in the exercise of the large whip he held in his hand, applying it to the half-naked bodies of the trembling blacks whenever their motions were not quick enough to please him.



As the gentlemen passed, he spoke to his employer, saying, "The negroes behave like fury to-day, sir; they are all as lazy as bears. I have whipped more than a dozen this morning."

"Poor creatures!" said George; "it is so hot, no wonder they are tired; I am sure I could not work under such a sun." At this remark the overseer stared at the young man with astonishment; the slaves looked up from their work for an instant, with an expression of stupid wonder on their dark faces, as if doubting whether he who uttered a sentiment so strangely humane *could* be a *white man*.

The young planter laughed rather contemptuously, and, taking his companion by the arm, led him away from the spot, saying, "Come, Allen, your Yankee notions will never do here. I never let my negroes hear such speeches as you made just now; we should have an insurrection in a week."

"Why, it surely would not make them discontented to know that they were pitied for their hard fate; it seems to me rather a strange principle, that the more kindness you show a man the more ungrateful he will be."

"My dear fellow, a *negro* is a very differen

affair; there is no such feeling as gratitude in his heart. The more you do for him the more he expects; and if you once let him suspect that he might be, or ought to be, any thing but a slave, it would be impossible to keep him in order."

George made no reply, for he did not know out his companion spoke truth; and they went to the house.

After they left the overseer, his quick eye observed a boy about twelve years of age, who was sitting on the ground, looking after the gentlemen as long as he could see them.

"What are you doing, you lazy dog?" said his taskmaster, kicking his naked side. "Get up and go to work, this instant."

"O massa, John no lazy," said the child, looking up imploringly; "him head ache *so bad*."

"Nonsense! Go to work, or you shall have a flogging."

"John so bad he can't work, massa."

The anger of the overseer was aroused; and, seizing the sobbing child by the arm, he whipped him most cruelly, exclaiming, —

"I'll teach you to have the headache, you little villain."

The mother of the boy, who had stood looking on in agony, when she saw the blood streaming from her child's back, could bear it no longer. but, falling on her knees before the cruel man, with clasped hands, begged him to spare her son.

"O, massa, do forgive him! He will work. *Pray*, no kill my boy; me got nobody else to love me."

The only answer was a blow from the whip, and a fresh application of the lash to his victim. Before night the boy was raving in a brain fever; and in two days he died.

George Allen succeeded for a time in concealing his rapidly progressing habits of vice; but the suspicions of his friends were awakened and soon received full confirmation.

Mr. Benson, Adelaide's father, had occasion to go one afternoon to a part of the city not very familiar to him, to attend an auction, and stopped at a coffee-house for some refreshment, as he returned. As he was waiting for the servant, his attention was drawn by the boisterous conduct of a number of fashionable young men in another part of the room, and his surprise was great when he saw George Allen in the midst of them, talking and laughing, while his flushed

cheek and wandering eye too plainly indicated the state he was in, and Mr. Benson could not avoid seeing that he was intoxicated.

He was much shocked at this discovery, and still more so when he heard him make use of the most profane and blasphemous language, such as could only proceed from a mind long familiarized with vice.

He had for some time suspected that his young friend was becoming dissipated, but had no idea of what fearful progress he had already made.

George Allen's affection for the lovely Adelaide was sincere, and he really intended when he found himself beloved in return to reform, and thought he never would yield to temptation again. But even this motive was too weak to bring back to virtue one whose heart was unchanged. No inducement can ever be sufficient to reclaim the vicious, that does not at first lead to repentance and point to heaven as the reward.

Mr. Benson saw that George was not in a fit state to be reasoned with, and therefore went home without being seen by him.

The affectionate father dreaded the consequences of the disclosure of her lover's unworthiness which must be made to his daughter, and could

not resolve to tell her what he had seen, until he was forced to it by a circumstance which took place a few days after.

Adelaide and a young female friend were returning from a visit, just in the commencement of the evening.

They had been accidentally detained much later than they intended, and were hurrying along the street, when they were rudely accosted by two young men *dressed fashionably*, but evidently in such a state of intoxication as deprived them of any claim to the name of *gentlemen*.

The young ladies were much terrified ; but an elderly gentleman, who was passing, came to their protection, and the young men fled ; but not until Adelaide had recognized in one of them George Allen.

The surprise had such an effect on her that she fainted ; but as neither the young lady who was with her nor their unknown protector was aware of the connection between them, they attributed her swoon to terror, and, having procured a hack, accompanied her home.

Those only who have experienced the heart-breaking feeling which follows the sudden consciousness of the utter unworthiness of a long-

cherished object of the deepest attachment, can sympathize with Adelaide.

For a time she felt as though life was no longer desirable; but when she saw her mother's tender expression of concern, and her dear father's anxious countenance, she felt deeply her own selfishness, in wishing to leave them forever because she had not been made happy by the fulfilment of all her own wishes.

Her disposition was too frank to admit of concealment, and when her father asked the cause of her illness, she related the circumstance to him, adding that she had long feared some such discovery, and was now resolved to break every tie which bound her to one who had shown himself so destitute of principle, though she was confident he did not know the person whom he had insulted.

When George Allen awoke next morning he found a letter on his table from Mr. Benson, stating as briefly as possible the recent knowledge he had acquired of his true character, and that his daughter wished him for the future to consider himself released from his engagement with her, adding that henceforth he must never expect to see her again.

The feelings of the wretched young man can be more easily imagined than described, for he had really loved Adelaide with the strong affection of a young and ardent mind. He had not stopped to reflect since he commenced his career of dissipation; he had banished all virtuous thoughts; and the possibility of his profligate conduct being known to her, and producing such an effect, had never once occurred to him.

Now, when he saw the cup of happiness dashed from his lips at the very moment he was tasting the delicious draught, and by his own hand too, he was almost maddened by the disappointment.

His first impulse was to go to Adelaide, notwithstanding the prohibition in the letter; but when his vehement ring at the door was answered by the black servant, who held the door in his hand, while he said, his mistress "could not see Mr. Allen," George was almost frantic.

Returning to his lodging, he locked himself into his room and wept passionately, as he thought of his own folly in venturing certain happiness against a few months of wild, unbridled pleasure. What he had lost could never be his own

what he had gained had only made him more miserable.

“If she would only see me,” said he, “if she would only hear how I have been tempted, I know she would forgive me. I should reform if I might win *her*. How could I be so perfectly idiotic as to go into that coffee-house with those fellows? I might have known that my evil genius would send some one there that knew me.”

He paced the room in a state approaching to frenzy, exclaiming, “How can I give her up? Never see her again! O! I cannot endure the thought.”

He stopped; and, striking his forehead, muttered through his teeth, “A bullet would end the affair, and then — Adelaide would bitterly repent her rashness in renouncing me without giving me time to tell her of the peculiar difficulties I have met in my attempt to become virtuous. But could I dare to die? Why not? death is but an ‘eternal sleep,’ an endless repose from trouble and care. But to plunge myself into uncertainty — What if the old Quaker *should* be right, after all? but then we *always* find piety.

as it is termed, among the ignorant; very few enlightened minds are fettered by such a tissue of absurdity as the Bible. Strange that it should have remained so long in existence. There was Weston, who rejected it entirely, and he was a villain. Jackson believed it, and was as fine a fellow as I ever saw; but that was affection for his mother, more than any other motive. Strange, though, that all who — But there's no good in thinking about it; only, if the Bible is true — O, how Weston looked when Jackson spoke of a final judgment! even he turned pale." And George shuddered when he thought of it, and for a moment an expression of fear and doubt shadowed his face; but starting suddenly from his musing posture, he snatched his hat and left the room, muttering, "No matter! the die is cast. If it is so, I have gone too far to expect forgiveness, and may as well go on as not. I shall do wisely in taking all that the world will give of pleasure. But Adelaide! — O, I could have been happy and virtuous both with her! I must try to forget her." And he went to the bank, to drive away serious reflections by application to business.

At night, he went to a billiard-room and won a hundred dollars, and the next night he lost two hundred.

The last link which bound him to virtue was broken ; and, like a fiery courser loosened from the rein, he rushed madly on to destruction.

The goal was soon reached ; his money was all gone. He had been allowed a quarter's salary in advance ; that he lost at one game. What could he do ? Love of gaming had become a passion. He was already fearfully intemperate ; and, in a fit of despair, he forged a draft on one of the principal commercial houses in the city, in the name of his employer. It is certainly true that his hand trembled when he presented it ; but it was just dark, and no one saw the paleness of his cheek as he received the money. " I shall win enough to replace it," said he to himself, " long before it becomes due."

In this he was mistaken. Constant ill-luck attended him, until one night the planter who had invited him to the theatre, and was now one of his most constant companions, brought to the billiard-room, a boy of about sixteen, a delicate-looking, fashionably-dressed lad, whose manners and conversation evinced a refined education

and gentle disposition. He seemed desirous to play, but half-afraid to venture.

His fears were soon overcome by the planter, who said, laughing, "Why, Henry, you surely are not afraid to play ! You always win when you play for amusement only ; why should you be less successful when there is a prize at stake ? "

" I am not afraid, certainly," said he, blushing, and went up to the table, where he was introduced to Allen ; and, while he was counting the money, his false friend took George aside, and whispered, " Now, my dear fellow, you have a rare chance of recovering your cash. This boy is a perfect novice at billiards. He never played with any one but me, and as I had nothing at stake, I played as badly as I could, and now he thinks himself a famous hand at it.

" You need not be at all anxious concerning his ability to pay, for his father is one of the richest men in the city," he added, observing a saddened expression steal over the face of his hearer. Until now, George had never sought to ruin the innocent ; he had associated in his revels only with those who were more abandoned than himself, and he had not yet learned to feel perfectly indifferent toward such as the one

who was now to try his skill with him. But he thought of the forged note and the inevitable disgrace which would ensue were he unable to take it up when it became due, and his remorseful feelings gave place to anxiety for his own success.

As the result of the game became more doubtful, the combatants watched each other's strokes with intense anxiety.

The planter watched their movements with a practised eye ; and George, looking up accidentally, saw his eye fixed on Henry with such a glance of scorn and hatred, that his blood curdled at its expression, and a strange fear came over him. It seemed like the exultation of a fiend over his victim.

It was but an instant, and his attention was again absorbed by the game. It was soon decided ; George had won.

The boy's distress was so great that, had it not been for the recollection of the note, he would have returned the money. He was deeply touched, as he looked on the young gambler, who was very beautiful, with dark blue eyes, shadowed by long, dark lashes, with an almost feminine expression of confiding tenderness, which seldom failed to win the love of all who saw him.

The heartless planter appeared to sympathize in his loss, and wondered *how it could have happened*, for Allen was generally the most unlucky dog in the world.

"I do not care so much for the money," said Henry, "but my dear father will be so distressed when he hears where I have lost it. O! it would break my mother's heart, and I am an only child now."

After the violence of his grief had subsided, the planter hinted that, if he would play again, he would most probably win, as he never knew Allen win two games in succession.

"But I have no more money."

"Ah! that is unlucky. I would lend you some, if I had any; you know my poverty was what prevented me from playing with you; but," said he, "you have a gold watch worth double the sum you have lost."

Henry started, turned pale, and looked at his false friend distrustfully; then said in a low, tremulous voice, "You know I cannot part with that, it was the last gift of my dear sister; if she could look down from heaven and see me risk her last token of love at a gaming-table"——

"If," interrupted the planter; "but I some-

what doubt that. However, there can be no unhappiness in heaven, you know, even if she could see you, especially as you do it to save your parent from misery."

This false reasoning had the desired effect upon the boy. After a moment's hesitation, he laid down the watch with a trembling hand, saying, "If I should lose it, I should die of grief." "Poh! you will not," was the laughing reply of his tempter.

With a beating heart Henry watched the game; as he saw George likely to win, and when the result was evident, his agitation became overpowering. George won; the poor boy must part with his watch.

The hot tears poured from his eyes like rain. He kissed the forfeited treasure; and in the midst of his grief he looked up at his supposed friend and caught his eye fixed on him with such an expression of concentrated malignity, while his lip was curled with a fiendish sneer at this exhibition of unrestrained, boyish sorrow, that Henry was no longer in doubt respecting the motive which had influenced his late conduct.

Suddenly drying his tears and drawing up his slender form to its full height, while his

bright eyes flashed with anger, he poured forth such a torrent of bitter reproaches that the base planter, who had not dreamed of such a spirit in the gentle boy, trembled and turned pale at this exposure of his villany.

He stood like one spell-bound, before the indignant boy, as, with the burning eloquence of the south, he reproved the heartless villain who had so eagerly sought to ruin him; then vehemently declaring that nothing should ever induce him to seek pleasure again at the gaming-table, he turned to George and besought him, with the most fervent entreaties, to allow him to redeem the watch which he had promised his sister on her deathbed never to part with. "I know," said he, "I deserve to lose it, for breaking my plighted word so basely; but I would rather part with every thing I own in the world than never be allowed to call it mine again. I intend to go directly to my father and tell him all; he will forgive me, I know; and if you will leave it to-morrow at M. Serrier's, I will redeem it and leave the money with him, or, if you prefer, I will call at your lodgings myself."

George, who had been much affected by Henry's distress, readily agreed to this proposal.

but, afraid of his love of gambling being known, he gave his address, making him promise secrecy ; and the boy left the fatal place, after one glance at the highly-prized watch, his bright face beaming with hope, and a smile on his lips, though his cheek was still wet with the bitter tears of remorse.

His hopes were not disappointed. Early the next morning he called upon George to claim his treasure according to promise. They went together to a jeweller's and ascertained its value. Henry paid the sum required and received his treasure with delight.

"This shall be a lesson to me forever," said he, "never to call any one friend who tempts me to do wrong. O! you cannot imagine my mother's grief when she heard of my wicked conduct. I never, never will give her occasion for sorrow again." "Have you a mother, Allen?" continued the ardent boy, seizing George's hand. "How would she feel, if she knew what you are doing here? Pray leave off gaming, and become an honorable man. Let me introduce you to my father and mother, who would love you, I know."

George thanked his youthful adviser, and

bidding him good morning, walked quietly away to free himself from unwelcome reflections, which intruded themselves, unbidden, as he looked on the warm-hearted boy, full of high hopes and virtuous resolves, so unsuspecting and so ardent.

George Allen was enabled, by the sum last won, to redeem his note the day before it became due.

One step taken in vice, unless retraced, inevitably leads to another and another, until the sinner's downward progress becomes so fearfully accelerated that nothing can arrest it, even when the gulf which yawns to receive him is in full view.

In less than a week George found he must obtain a new supply of money; and, emboldened by his success in his first attempt, he forged another note for a thousand dollars, which he presented at a bank in the name of a merchant well known in the city.

His evenings were now not confined to gambling-houses. Constant associations with the most unprincipled and dissolute men, who feared neither God nor man, could not fail of polluting his mind and utterly destroying all his remaining

love of virtue, or ambition to regain his early rank in society. All thought, all desire, was limited to present pleasures, and those too of the most sensual kind.

His business was neglected, his love of dissipation and intemperance was no longer disguised, and his employer had repeatedly warned him that he could no longer be retained in his present situation unless he altered his course.

Remonstrance was useless : George could not, ay, *could not*, abstain from indulgence in vice, the lowest and most degrading. His very existence seemed bound up in sensuality.

At length the note became due : he could not meet the demand. Of this he had been aware for some time, and had resolved on making his escape from the city to avoid the penalty attached to his crime.

But whither could he go without money ? This question puzzled him ; and, at length, he resolved to hazard a most daring attempt.

This was, to gain access to the bank where he was employed, in the night, and steal a large amount of bills and cash, then leave the city in one of the early stages.

Having procured the necessary tools, he re-

paired to the place on Saturday night, as he should be more likely to escape before the robbery should be discovered.

At midnight, with a dark lantern in his pocket, George arrived at the bank; and, having carefully reconnoitred the building, and ascertained that all was quiet, he began his operations.

With the exertion of his utmost strength he succeeded in forcing the massive locks, and came at length to the iron-bound door which separated him from the money-vault.

This resisted his utmost efforts for a while, but at length it yielded. He was in the place where his wants might be provided for; and, as he forced one of the iron chests and saw the treasures within his grasp, his heart beat fast with joy, — wild, tumultuous joy, — and he seized upon it with the avidity of a miser. His intention, when he planned this desperate enterprise, was to possess himself of only a thousand dollars, which might suffice until he could reach some place where he was unknown, and devise some other means of living; but, when he saw the quantity of wealth by which he was surrounded, he could not resist the desire of taking more — reasoning, very correctly, that the sin of

stealing did not depend on the value of the thing taken.

He had turned from the money, and was about leaving the vault, when a slight noise awakened his fears. He listened; it was a footstep rapidly approaching the place where he stood; he turned pale with apprehension.

Had he succeeded thus far only to be detected when almost sure of escaping! The thought was agony. He looked round despairingly on the stone walls, as if hoping they would open and afford him a place of concealment.

Vain thought! he stood there alone and defenceless. The step came nearer,—it echoed through the long passages, and stopped at the door of the vault. It was a watchman. “Ha, villain, I have you!” he shouted, as he sprang upon George.

He was a tall, powerful man; but despair gave George almost supernatural strength, and he made such desperate resistance, that the watchman had no time to spring his rattle or give any alarm.

The struggle was long and fierce; but George felt his strength fast giving way before the pow-

erful arm of his antagonist. He gasped for breath. Thoughts of disgrace, and, still more dreadful, long years of solitary confinement,—hopeless, endless imprisonment,—darted through his mind.

He was unarmed; but his eye at that instant caught sight of an iron bar, one of the fastenings of the door. It seemed as though a fiend whispered in his ear. With a sudden exertion of strength, he swung his opponent round, till the weapon was within his reach. Quick as lightning he seized it, and struck the watchman on the head. The blow fell on his temple; and, without a groan, his grasp relaxed;—he fell to the ground. George turned pale when he saw the effect of his blow. The faithful guardian of the night had fallen a sacrifice to his own vigilance. George knew by the fixed expression of his features that he was dead. Bitter was his remorse, but it was unavailing; he had come here to commit a robbery—he must go away a *murderer*!

Horrid thought! he would have given all he had just taken to have restored his victim to life. He had not intended to kill him. He scarcely knew what he did; but murder, certainly,

was not in his heart. He only struck to save himself.

Alas! how little can any know where they shall stop, when they commence a career of vice and crime!

George Allen had begun by gaming; that led to forgery, robbery, and finally *murder*, though not premeditated.

How fearfully that dead face glared on him, with its glassy eyes, and the stillness of death setting on the stern features!

A stream of blood issued from his temple and flowed over the pale cheek—the dark crimson acquiring a still more appalling hue from the contrast.

George glanced at the dark recesses in the walls and up at the arched roof, and fancied, as the dim light of his lantern cast its quivering rays over the face, “the dead man frowned.” It was but fancy;—the quick throbbings of that heart so lately warm with life were stilled forever, and his murderer was alone with the dead.*

It was but a moment that he stood gazing on the prostrate form before him, so powerless in the iron grasp of death.





Anxiety for his own safety soon aroused him from his reverie ; and, hastily taking up his lantern, he fled through the long, dark passages ; and, as the wind rushed through them, it seemed to his excited imagination that he could hear voices, and wild, unearthly laughter, as of fiends exulting over their prey and claiming the murderer for their own.

It was not until he reached the open air that he breathed freely ; then, extinguishing his lantern, he threw it from him and hastily sought a stage-office.

A stage for Baltimore was just starting ; and, paying the fare, he sprang into it, wrapped himself in his cloak, and was whirled rapidly through the silent streets.

It was not known in New Orleans until Monday morning, that a bank robbery had been committed ; and great was the indignation of the citizens when the body of the murdered watchman was found.

A large reward was immediately offered by the mayor for the apprehension of the villain, but who he was was not suspected for some time.

The driver of the Baltimore stage, on return-

ing to the city, mentioned that, on the night the murder was committed, a young man came up to the stage panting for breath as though he had been running, and demanded a seat; that he noticed by the light of the stage lamps, that his face was very pale, and he seemed much agitated.

When George Allen's absence was discovered, and his love of gaming became known, his having presented a forged note, for the payment of which his employer was called upon, these circumstances led to a suspicion that he was the perpetrator of the horrid deed, though his previous good character since he had been in the city made his friends unwilling to harbor so dreadful a thought.

In the mean time, the object of these suspicions had, as soon as he arrived in Baltimore, called at several banks and exchanged his bills of New Orleans for gold and silver, and United States bank-notes, that the circumstance of his having so much money of one bank might not lead to his detection.

This being done, he determined to leave the country as soon as possible, thinking he should

no. feel himself secure any where within reach of New Orleans newspapers.

He soon found a vessel ready to sail for South America, and, taking passage in her, was beyond reach before the news of the robbery reached Baltimore. There we will leave him and return to his wretched parents.

It was a beautiful morning in September. The bright rays of the sun were reflected in the clear depths of Connecticut River, and the trees were loaded with fruit. Heaps of bright, red apples were lying on the grass, ready to be transported to the storehouse or cider-mill ; and every living thing seemed to be in motion. The cows were going from the milking-yard to the pasture ; horses were standing in the farm-yard, in company with the patient, gentle-looking oxen, waiting to be employed in carrying home the fruit ; and the merry, rosy children were busy, with all the tireless activity of happy childhood, in calling the fowls to receive their breakfast, feeding the pigs, bringing in the milk-pails, and any thing else their little busy hands could find to do ; while, from all animate and inanimate nature, arose that indescribable but harmonious sound

which none but those who have enjoyed an autumnal morning in the country can realize. It is the mingling of all the joyous but inarticulate voices of bird and beast, tree and flower, rejoicing in their happiness.

Mr. Allen had never heard of his son since his expulsion from college, and his wife was almost broken-hearted in consequence of this disappointment of her fond anticipations; for she had hoped and expected to see her son distinguished for talents and acquirements. Still, with the fervor of a mother's love, she would not believe him utterly lost to all hope, but cherished in secret a firm expectation of his returning to redeem his character.

The grief of Mr. Allen was not deeper, perhaps, but partook more of the inconsolable nature of despair. It made him unsocial; and, under the garb of indifference, he suffered it to prey upon his heart, until his health was impaired and all the gentle affections of his breast seemed extinguished.

At the farm of Isaiah Rogers all was peace and contentment. His eldest sons were pious, industrious men; one of them was a preacher of their own sect, and the other was his father's assistant in carrying on the farm.

This beautiful morning seemed to conquer the habit of sobriety in the Quakers; and a loud laugh from the children, as they were attending to the morning duties of feeding the "creatures," as they are called in farmer phraseology, when their mirth was excited by the greediness of some selfish pig, or the unseemly contentions of some refractory chickens, as they received their breakfast, was too much for the gravity of Isaiah.

Presently a rosy-checked little girl came dancing out of the house, and gradually sobering down her pace to a demure walk, as she approached her father, said, "Will thee come in to breakfast, all of ye?" "Ay, that we will," said her older brother; "we have worked hard enough, all of us, to get an appetite."

When all were gathered round the table, the old man raised his clasped hands, and silently implored a blessing on the abundance which was before them.

This heartfelt thanksgiving offered up, they all sat down to their plentiful repast, which consisted of hot meat and potatoes, the necessary ingredients in a New England country break-

fast, bread of Indian meal, fresh butter, eggs, honey, and new milk.

All who partook of this simple meal were happy in the consciousness of doing to all their fellow-creatures as they would be done by. What they possessed was acquired by constant, unremitting toil and strict energy.

Breakfast over, the family were soon all dispersed to their various employments — the father to the apple-orchard, to carry a load of apples to the cider-mill. The youngest boy was permitted to go with him, and mounted the cart in high glee, with the long whip in his little sun-burnt hand, ready to make a grand flourish over Dobbin's back when they should start.

Far different were the feelings of Mr. Allen and his wife. To them the fresh beauty of the morning brought no happiness; and, when they sat down to their plentiful breakfast, no humble thanksgiving sent up its grateful incense to the Giver of all blessings.

As they were at breakfast the horn of the stageman was heard, and Mr. Allen went out to get the newspaper.

As soon as he obtained it he returned, and,

again seating himself at the table, commenced reading aloud.

Almost the first article which met his eye was headed, "Bank Robbery in New Orleans," and describing in glowing colors the atrocious murder, and robbery to the amount of twenty-five thousand dollars; with a reward offered for the apprehension of the villain; and concluded by stating that a young man who called himself George Allen, and had been employed as a clerk in this bank for about a year, was suspected, as he was known to have become deeply involved in gaming, and to have forged a note for a thousand dollars a few days previous, which was probably his motive for committing so atrocious a deed.

The farmer was not a great proficient in the "art of reading," and always read straight on, without looking to see what was coming next. He was, therefore, unaware of the purport of this astounding information until he had read his son's name.

Then indeed he was sensible of the dreadful nature of the news. The paper dropped from his hands, and he sat apparently stupefied by what he had read, unconscious of the agony of

his wife, who uttered a piercing shriek and exclaimed, "He is not guilty, I know he is not guilty!" then fainted, and was carried to her chamber by the frightened domestics, who tried in vain to rouse Mr. Allen to a consciousness of what was going on around him. Finding it impossible to make him notice any thing, one of the men ran for the doctor, and meeting by the way Isaiah Rogers and his little son, going to the cider-mill with his load of apples, he told the news to him, adding that he believed Mr. Allen had lost his reason, for he could not be made to speak or take any notice of any body, though he did not know but the news had killed his wife.

The good Quaker did not wait to hear more than half of the man's story, before he dismounted from his cart, and, tying the horse to a tree, told his little boy to "run home and tell his brother Joshua to tackle one of the horses and bring his mother right over to Mr. Allen's;" then, with the characteristic promptness of his benevolent mind, he ran to the house of this afflicted neighbor, and found him still in the seat he occupied when the dreadful words first met his eye.

There he sat, his eyes fixed on vacancy, the large veins on his forehead swelled almost to

bursting, his mouth compressed, and his hands clenched, looking as though sudden grief had turned him to stone. He returned no answer to the consolation Isaiah Rogers attempted to offer, and the good Quaker became alarmed. "May God have mercy on him," he exclaimed. Just at that moment, the doctor entered, who said, he must be bled immediately, or apoplexy might ensue such violent emotion.

His muscular arm was bared by the sympathizing Quaker, and after a moment the blood began to flow freely.

This produced the desired effect. The unfortunate man heaved a deep sigh, and looked wildly round; then, looking at the bandage on his arm, the color mounted to his brow, and faded as quickly, as his eye caught the fatal paper; and shutting his eyes, he groaned deeply as he muttered, "Wretched boy, a murderer! O, if he had died in the river, in his innocence, I might have been spared this disgrace and misery, to bring down my gray hairs to the grave. Ungrateful child! how could he forget all my warnings and advice to keep from bad company? Would to God he had died in his cradle!"

To this passionate lamentation, Isaiah Rogers

did not attempt to make any reply, for he would not inflict a deeper wound on the heart of the distressed father, by suggesting that, had he conducted the education of his son on different principles, he would not now be mourning over his ruin.

The wife of the good Quaker, who was as ready to exert herself to relieve distress as her benevolent husband, had instantly complied with the request made by her little boy, and come to Mr. Allen's house as soon as a horse could be harnessed; and her tender and judicious treatment had recovered the unfortunate mother from her deathlike swoon, before the physician succeeded in restoring Mr. Allen to consciousness; and, when he went to her chamber, he found his assistance was not needed. So, recommending rest and care, he departed, leaving her in the care of her sympathizing nurse.

It was a far easier task to console and comfort her than to alleviate the anguish of her husband. He would listen to no palliation of his boy's guilt, and no suggestion that he might have been unjustly suspected; that there was no proof of his having committed so deadly a crime, and it was not probable he had, in so short a time, be-

come so utterly abandoned, as to be both a murderer and a robber. To all the suppositions of the good Quaker, he paid no attention, and said, he did not doubt the accusation was well-founded; and he should live to know that his only child, the object of all his hopes and wishes, had died upon the gallows.

In vain did Isaiah Rogers attempt to lead his thoughts to God, and entreat him to look for comfort in prayer, and trust in Him who has said he came to heal the broken-hearted. There was no chord in his heart that would respond to such a sentiment; and, like Cain, he felt his grief was too great for him to bear, but still proudly refused consolation.

Not so his wife. Woman's heart will fondly refuse to believe any wrong of those enshrined within it, even when no one else can doubt of their guilt. God, in mercy to so gentle and helpless a being, gave Hope to be a guardian angel, to shield her in sorrow, and preserve her from despair. She is formed to confide her griefs and joys in some one, to seek a protector to whom she may look up for support and sympathy. O, I do not envy men their firmness, as they term it; the cold, stern philosophy, which

teaches them to restrain feelings which might find relief in indulgence ; to scorn pity, proudly reject sympathy, and suffer in silence. Their hearts, cased in the steel breast-plate of self-control, may break, but will not bend. Such stern apathy may be more exalted, more noble, than woman's weakness ; but I pity them, unless they have yielded to the softening influence of the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus ; and surely the pride of the haughtiest philosopher need not be wounded by submission to the will of his God.

Mrs. Allen never would, even for a moment, admit the possibility of George's guilt ; he was always so affectionate, so light-hearted, and so kind to every one.

With these recollections of her son's early character did this devoted mother fortify her mind against the dark suspicion which would sometimes intrude itself upon her, — a fear that she should hear his guilt confirmed.

Her health rapidly declined. Anxiety preyed upon her vitals ; but still she fondly cherished a hope which she would not reveal, lest it should be taken from her, that her beloved child would yet come home to vindicate himself from the

charge against him. But she felt the truth, so beautifully expressed by the sacred writer, that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." Hers was indeed sick, sick unto death; and she had no one to sympathize with her, or to whom she could confide her feelings, as her husband forbade any allusion to his wretched son, and she dared not incur his displeasure by disobeying his command.

In his heart, wounded pride and disappointed ambition seemed to predominate over all the more tender feelings; at least, love for his son, and grief, a father's grief, were not the *strongest* emotions in his breast.

He had relied too much on his son's acknowledged talents, and expected too much from him, to bear disappointment with resignation.

While he had been uncertain of George's fate, and doubtful whether he had not fallen a victim to a southern climate, he felt disposed to think he had been unjustly expelled from college, and to call his misconduct by no harsher name than youthful folly; but now that his name had been connected with crime, and he could no longer doubt that he was utterly unprincipled, his feelings were changed, and seemed to par-

take of the nature of resentment toward his child, for having so disgraced himself

The winter passed away, and another spring and summer smiled upon the farmers; another plentiful harvest had filled their barns and store-houses with plenty; but still the parents of George knew nothing concerning him, and with aching hearts contrasted their situation with that of their neighbors, especially the happy family of the Quaker, who was now enjoying the result of the good principles he had taught his children.

The merry months of harvesting were over, and winter, with its chilling breath and icy fingers, had stripped the trees of their verdure, and covered the earth with a mantle of snow.

It was on a cold evening in January, when Mr. Allen and his wife were sitting by their warm fire. The maple logs were piled high in the large fireplace, and sent up a bright blaze, diffusing a generous warmth throughout the whole room, while the crackling of the flames and snapping of the wood, seeming to promise so much comfort, were contrasted with the dismal sound of the north-east wind, as it howled through the trees.

A violent storm was gathering; black clouds

were flying in rapid succession before the wind the forest-trees groaned, and their branches creaked and swung in the blast.

The deep waters of the Connecticut went hurrying on, with a sullen, rushing sound, and their hue was dark as night, except the tops of the waves, as they were lashed into foam by the tempest.

The air was soon filled with snow, whirling about in every direction; and, as the fury of the storm increased, it was almost impossible to breathe in the open air; and any one would not have been able to see the distance of a yard before him, the snow fell so fast and thick.

In the midst of this war of elements, a man was struggling through the snow up the road toward Mr. Allen's farm. He was meanly and thinly clad, and his strength seemed to be nearly exhausted; still he kept on, stopping every moment to turn his back to the driving sleet, and take breath. He proceeded but slowly, and soon felt that his strength was fast failing. It was with difficulty that he could keep his footing; and as his feet, benumbed with cold, and wearied with the fatigue of travelling all day, slipped in the drifting snow, he despaired of reaching any

house, before his exhausted frame should sink in the accumulating heaps of snow, which he feared would be his grave.

Suddenly as the road turned, he saw a light, which appeared to come from a dwelling-house. Its trembling rays seemed to infuse new life into the tired stranger. For a few moments he pressed on with renewed vigor ; but when he had struggled up the hill, and was very near the house, he suddenly lost sight of his beacon-light ; and, after plunging through the snow-drifts a few moments, his wearied limbs could no longer support him. Despairing and chilled, he sunk on the ground, and resigned himself to death.

He shouted with all his strength again and again, but his voice was lost in the tumult of the storm.

If he had known how near he was to a place of safety and comfort, he might have reached it ; but he had wandered out of the road, and, crossing a meadow, had come behind the house in such a direction that the barns hid it entirely from his sight, when, believing that the light had been only a fancy, or that deceptive appearance which is so often seen near swamps and low places, he felt all effort to be vain, and was now

lying almost insensible within a hundred yards of a shelter from the piercing cold.

At the same time Mr. Allen and his wife were sitting before their glowing fire, lonely and mournful. They had just recollected that this was their son's birthday, when he was, if living, twenty-two years of age. They could not but remember, that seventeen years before, they had sat by this same fireside, rejoicing over his rescue from the dark waters of the Connecticut; and, as they now listened to its sullen murmuring, they recalled all the hopes and fears which agitated their breasts while Isaiah Rogers exerted his utmost skill to restore life to the unconscious child.

Neither spoke; but as the mother thought how she had sat, at evening, in this very room, at their return, and held her sleeping boy cradled on her bosom, and watched, with all a mother's feelings, his infant features reposing in their silent beauty, as his dimpled cheek was curled by a smile when bright dreams were flitting through his innocent mind, her heart swelled almost to bursting with its bitter emotions.

"Where," she thought, "is that head reposing

now? Perhaps in the depths of the ocean preyed upon by the frightful monsters that fill its dark abyss; perhaps he is dying in some foreign dungeon; or he may be perishing in the snow at this moment, without a shelter for his frozen limbs."

As this last thought crossed her mind she rose, and going to the window, looked out through the storm. Nothing was visible but the masses of whirling, drifting snow, which were piled up before the door; and she turned shuddering away and resumed her seat by the fire.

A few moments after one of the men came in, and, with an expression of fright on his rude features, exclaimed, "Do, pray, Mr. Allen, come out; John and I have found a man, frozen to death, or most to death, behind the barn. I and he went out to see to the *creturs* before we went to bed, and be sure they was comfortable such an awful cold night; and, while we was a putting horse blankets on to them, we heard a kind of a groaning close to us. We went out and hunted all round in the snow; and there was a man in one of the great snow-drifts, so I come back to get you to help us to bring him in."

All the time the fellow had been telling his story, Mr. Allen was putting on his great coat and fur cap; for he had started at the first sentence as if an adder had bitten him, and his wife uttered a scream at the occurrence, so much in accordance with her own thoughts. Perhaps the same thought had presented itself to her husband, for his countenance seemed agitated with some strong emotion, as he prepared himself to go out. In a moment he was equipped to brave the cold, and accompanied the man to the relief of the sufferer with some blankets to wrap him in.

It required their utmost strength to carry the unconscious being even that short distance. Twice they were obliged to stop before they could reach the house.

Mr. Allen directed them to carry the man into the room where his wife was, and they laid him on a sofa before the fire.

It was soon ascertained that he was not dead, for his heart still beat, though very faintly.

Exertions were instantly made to recover him; and, as Mrs. Allen anxiously watched their effect, the image of her son returned again and again to her imagination. The thought rushed into

her mind, as she looked on the unfortunate being before her, perhaps this wanderer was her child ; but, as she looked at him again, she could not for a moment cherish it.

The stranger appeared to be a young man, but very different from her idolized boy ; his face was extremely emaciated, as though he had suffered much from disease or want ; his complexion was dark, and George's was very fair. O it could not be that he had altered so much in so short a time ! She recalled his image as she last saw him : his step was light and firm ; his cheek flushed with the rich color of youth, and his bright blue eyes beamed with health and happiness. She wished the stranger would open his eyes, for George's eyes were very peculiar — a clear, dark blue, with long dark lashes, which gave them an expression singularly fascinating.

The warmth of the room and the means used for his restoration soon revived him ; and, as the chilled blood flowed more freely through his veins, he commenced talking in an indistinct manner. The tones of his voice brought tears to the mother's eyes, they were so hollow, and told so plainly of recent suffering. At first his voice was so low, and his words so inarticulate,

they could not be understood; but, as his consciousness returned, they could hear a few broken sentences.

The first articulate words were murmured without opening his eyes; slowly and with difficulty the anxious listeners comprehended him. "It was not a light—it was a spirit," he muttered; then with a shudder he whispered, "I knew him—it was *his* lantern—there was *blood* on his forehead—he was lighting my way to death." A shuddering so violent that it shook the couch on which he lay, was succeeded by a few moments of rest so still that his preservers doubted if he breathed.

The next words sent a thrill to the hearts of his listeners. "Dying," he murmured with closed eyes,—*"dying—and so near home! There was the old elm tree;—I saw the long branches. Dying, after having come so far! I am almost there. The light, did it come from home?—O, my mother!"* And with the last words a deep, long-drawn sigh burst from him, and he opened his eyes with a wild stare, full upon Mrs. Allen, who was gazing at him with an expression of intense anxiety. The moment their glance met hers she screamed, "It is he! it is my child! I know those blue eyes; nothing

can change them, or make me forget them. And this is his hair too," said she, passing her hand through the heavy, dark curls that clustered round his pale forehead. "O, why did I not know him before?"

"It cannot be he," said her husband, who was not less agitated than herself; "he does not look like George."

"I tell you it is he; who should know so well as a mother? I am sure it is he. Poor boy! how he has suffered, to alter him so dreadfully!"

It was but a short time before the traveller was sufficiently recovered to sit up and look round him; at first with a vacant stare, but as his eye rested on one familiar object after another, an expression of recollection gradually brightened his face, until his eye sought Mrs. Allen, who stood, with parted lips and pallid countenance, watching his movements.

The change that came over his face was instantaneous. His eyes flashed, and the color mounted to his brow, as, springing towards her, he exclaimed, "My mother!"

The sound of that word, so long unheard, entirely overpowered her, and she sunk into her son's arms insensible.

The certainty that the poor wanderer was his long-lost son almost deprived the father of consciousness. He leaned over him as he sunk on the sofa, exhausted by his violent emotion, and kissed his brow, and wasted, pallid cheek, with more than a father's fondness, and sobbed aloud, in the excess of mingled joy and sorrow.

The men who stood looking on showed almost as much feeling as their master, and for some time their sunburnt faces were wet with tears.

His guilt was all forgotten by his fond parents, and they rejoiced as though he had never sinned.

The next morning it was soon known all over the village, that George Allen had returned to his home; and many, who had pitied his sorrowing parents in their loneliness, hastened to congratulate them.

Among the first were the Quaker and his wife; and the tears stood in the good old man's eyes, and his voice was choked, as he looked on the young man who had but a few years before rejoiced in the fullness of health and happiness.

He was indeed fearfully altered. Vice and profligacy had destroyed his constitution, and brought him to a premature old age. His

form was bent, his face was perfectly colorless, except a hectic spot on his cheeks, that glowed with a feverish heat; and his eyes — those beautiful eyes — were deep-sunk, and sparkled with all the brilliancy of disease.

It was evident that consumption, that merciless destroyer, had set its seal upon him, and that he had returned to the home of his childhood only to die.

He came forward to meet Isaiah Rogers with a wildness of look and manner that startled the old man, and he murmured as he gave him his burning hand, "O, if I had recollected your prayer, if I had not forced myself to forget it, I might now be happy! But it is too late — it is too late."

In a conversation, a few days after, with Friend Rogers, George gave him such a description of his life after he left New Orleans, as made the good man's blood curdle with horror.

He had been an actor in scenes of vice and crime — the foremost in all. His mind had become inured to the most daring impiety, and the most shameless profligacy, until every trace of virtuous feeling seemed entirely obliterated.

When the good Quaker urged him, with the

earnestness of a true Christian, to repent and seek for pardon through the death of his Redeemer, he answered with bitterness, "I cannot; I feel remorse, deep, bitter remorse, for my past conduct, but no desire for pardon. I have denied the Son of God, I have ridiculed the Bible, and I dare not even think of him."

In vain did the pious man remind him of the thief on the cross, who was pardoned at his execution, and of the promise of our Savior, "Whosoever cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." To all his arguments the wretched young man replied, "For himself there was no hope; he had sinned against his own conscience; he had gone forward resolutely and determinedly in the path to destruction; he had stifled the first murmurs of warning and self-reproach; and now he must take the consequences."

Every day beheld him weaker and weaker, and it was evident to all who saw him that death would not be cheated of his prey.

Such was the sympathy felt for the distressed family, and so plain was it to all who saw George Allen that a few months at most must consign him to the silent grave, that abhorrence of his crime was lost in pity for his fate; and no one who had known him when all was bright

to his young mind, was hard-hearted enough to wish to add bitterness to the overflowing cup of sorrow and suffering which the youthful sinner must drain to the very dregs, by exposing him to justice.

Even avarice, which would have tempted some to have given information against him for the sake of reward, was not able to resist the silent sorrow of the parents and the emaciated form of the sufferer, his pale face glowing with the unearthly beauty of disease, and it was silenced by the voice of compassion pleading in their hearts, and the probability that he would not live until a letter could reach New Orleans.

It would be cruel, they said, not to allow the wretched young man to die in peace, after he had been a homeless wanderer so long.

The kind feeling towards him, and his having travelled to his home under a feigned name, with the retired habits of the good people of S——, prevented George Allen's return from being known to any without the village; and the afflicted parents were spared the agony of seeing their dying child taken from them, to endure the ignominy of a public trial and the horrors of a prison.

As the spring, that season so welcome to

youth and health, approached with its soft winds, his strength failed rapidly, and he felt that he should not see another summer.

His mind did not partake of his body's weakness, but retained its vigor and brilliancy unimpaired; and the future was a theme on which he brooded constantly—his fervid imagination giving a dark and fearful coloring to all his thoughts.

Mercy and pardon he would not think of. His whole soul was occupied with the fearful certainty, which he could not escape, of a judgment day, and the doom which awaited him. But even now, his emotions towards God partook more of hatred and sullen resistance than of repentance or fear.

His mother watched over him with agonizing tenderness, and still, with the fond incredulity of deep affection, refused to give up the hope, that "when spring came he would be better; as soon as he could go out in the fresh air, and visit all his favorite walks through the meadow, and down to the old elm tree by the river, and up to the maple wood, she knew he would recover his strength."

Alas, for woman's love! it will trust and hope, until the object of affection is snatched

from her retaining grasp by death, and the strong ties of love, which were entwined round her heart so firmly, are so rudely broken, that she yields up her own life in the struggle.

His father, with better judgment, refused to cherish so delusive a hope, and watched, in silent agony, the rapid progress of his son's disease, and saw all effort to restore him to health prove abortive.

One beautiful evening in May, George desired to be carried to the window, that he might see the last rays of the setting sun.

For some days previous he had been much worse, and at times delirious, but this afternoon he had been calmer, and even expressed a hope that he might recover; for it is well known that a groundless expectation of recovery, long after the most sanguine have given up all hope, is one of the most affecting features of consumption.

George was, at his earnest request, placed in an easy chair in front of the window, that he might gaze once more at the scenes of his childhood.

Isaiah Rogers came in and seated himself by the dying man, and the group would have been a fine subject for a painter.

The young man was gazing, with a swelling heart, on the loved objects which presented themselves to his view.

Death had set his seal on him too plainly for any to mistake it.

His dark blue eyes were fearfully bright, and there was a startling expression of hopeless anguish in their quick glances; his thick hair clustered in heavy curls around his hollow temples, making, in their neglected beauty, a striking contrast with his pale forehead and emaciated face.

His cheeks were burning with fever, and his mouth — O, how plainly it told of suffering! the parted lips, parched with disease, and the teeth so dazzling in their whiteness, the unnatural whiteness which attends this appalling complaint.

Beside him stood his mother, supporting his head; she looked weary and anxious, but not hopeless. She had attended him night and day, and her countenance showed the effect of much watching and sorrow.

The unhappy father stood opposite, and there could not be found a more striking contrast than there was between him and Friend Rogers.

Though the Quaker was several years older, he looked much younger. His brow had not been

furrowed by care or anxiety, and his honest, ruddy countenance spoke, in unequivocal language, of the peace and happiness which filled his breast, while Mr. Allen's face was thin and pale, and looked like that of an old man; his hair had within the last three years changed from a bright brown to a dull gray, and his whole air and manner were those of one absorbed with some corroding care.

George's restless glance wandered over the bright scene before him, with an expression of tenderness and a wish to remain among those haunts of his boyhood, which he well knew was not to be realized.

A fairer scene than that, man never looked upon. The majestic river, swollen by the snows of winter, rushed by, its blue waters sparkling in the sunbeams, and reflecting in its clear depths the warm, soft tints of the evening sky in blended hues of pink, purple, and that rich golden radiance which is so indescribable and so beautiful; and the trees in their fresh verdure, the lords of the forest, with bright green foliage, contrasted with the gayer apple-trees, covered with blossoms.

The grass had that soft fresh color so peculiar to spring, and the favorite old elm under which

George had so often played, waved in the gentle breeze, as though rejoicing in its own strength.

Over all this beauty the sick man cast a longing, wishful glance; then, turning from the window, his eyes met those of the Quaker, resting on him with an expression of pity and sympathy which went to his heart.

He closed his eyes, and the hot tears forced their way from between the tightly-closed lids and wet his cheek. His fancy had recalled that scene of his childhood which had ever been present to his mind in moments of reflection. The expression on the good old man's face was the same which met his eyes when he first awoke from the unconsciousness which had seemed so like death, after his rescue from the river.

The Quaker's prayer came back to his memory in all its fervent, humble piety, and he murmured, "Would to God that day had been my last, and I had died in my innocence!"

These words, faintly as they were uttered, reached the ears of his silent attendants, and sent a bitter pang to the father's heart. He recollected the words of Isaiah Rogers when he prayed that the child might be preserved from temptation and sin; and he felt that he had not

given his boy any sufficient motive to restrain him from *sin*, or any principles to guard him from *temptation*.

The Quaker read his thoughts, and ventured to seize the opportunity of pressing upon George the necessity of repentance and preparation for death.

He had never spoken on the subject before Mr. Allen, because *he* thought it wrong to excite George in the weak state of his nerves, willing rather to risk his eternal happiness than endanger his present comfort; but now he would not refrain, especially as he feared, from the young man's appearance, he should never see him again alive.

At the mention of this painful subject, George started, and the color fled from his cheek.

"It is useless to speak to me," said he, bitterly. "As to repentance, I do not, cannot feel it. I rejected and despised the Savior when I might have been pardoned, and now I tell you he will not accept of my submission, should I offer it."

To this the pious man answered by many quotations from Scripture, to prove the willingness of our Father in heaven to receive and pardon repentant sinners; but he labored in vain to convince George that there was still hope for



him, and when he had talked long and earnestly, the unhappy young man exclaimed, fiercely, —

“I tell you it is in vain to argue with me ; cannot and I *will not* pray for forgiveness. How *can* you expect a heart which was never taught love or obedience to God to feel it now, after a life of sin and impiety ? I repeat to you,” said he, with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes, “I have lived an infidel, and an infidel I shall die. Not that I do not believe in the existence of a Supreme Being ; I *know that* but *too well*, but I cannot *feel* it. And even if God would pardon me now, and receive me into heaven at death, it would be no heaven to me. I should take no pleasure in the company of pure and holy beings. How could I, who have all my life despised and ridiculed religion, spend an eternity in worshipping God ? It would be torment to me.”

To this Friend Rogers could return no answer, and the wretched father groaned aloud.

His son turned to him and said, “Father and mother, I would not unnecessarily wound your feelings ; but I must say that had you, when I was a child, taught me to look to the Bible for my principles of action, — had you taught me to control myself, — and, more than all, had you never encouraged me to warm in my bosom the

viper intemperance, which led me into bad company, — I might now be happy.

“ My taste for *ardent spirits*, which was created in my childhood, led me into temptation; it destroyed my love for study, and made me an easy prey to those who sought my ruin; it degraded me to a mere slave of sensual pleasure.

“ At the very moment you were rejoicing in my rescue from the river, you were teaching me to love the poison which has corroded my very soul.

“ I well remember the sweet mixture that was given me to restore warmth to my chilled limbs; far better if they had been chilled forever than warmed by that destroying fire ! ”

He sunk back exhausted by his emotion, and was a few moments after assisted to his bed, where he soon found a temporary relief in sleep.

About midnight he awoke in a high fever, and raved incoherently for some time about a crime he said he had committed; but his parents could not comprehend much of what he said, he spoke so rapidly and so indistinctly.

After a short interval of rest, as his agitated parents stood by his bedside, anxiously watching his deathlike countenance, he suddenly opened his eyes, and looking earnestly at his father,

asked, "Did you say there was no God? that it was merely the 'nature and fitness of things' — the affinity of particles to each other — that produced the universe? But," said he, after a moment's silence, "the soul! the soul! who made *that*? Ay, *who* made *that*? Is it possible it is only a higher instinct? Memory, memory!" he exclaimed, with a vehemence that made his hearers start, "will *that too* be annihilated? O, eternity!" he murmured, closing his eyes convulsively, as though to shut out some frightful image; and he continued talking to himself in a low, whispering tone.

"It is *blood*, and I *cannot* wash it off; my soul is dyed with it; it came from his forehead — O, how his eyes glare at me! — he is lying in that dark vault — I know you, spirits; you are come for me; but I tell you there is no God."

Conscience was awake, memory was bringing before the dying man all the aggravated guilt of his past life; and the unhappy votary of a cheerless skepticism was vainly endeavoring to drive away his fears by a continual recurrence to that ingenious sophistry which had once appeared so conclusive.

It has been most truly said that man may live

an infidel but cannot die one. The deathbed of the elegant Hume and the ingenious Voltaire, those giants in infidelity, would sufficiently prove it. Death, in all his horrid reality, was rapidly approaching his victim. His excitement became fearful, and he shouted, "I tell you there is no God! it is mere superstition. You never *saw* him; *how*, then, do you know he exists? — O! that dead man, *how* he looks at me! I did not intend to *kill* him! — O, Adelaide!" he murmured, in a softer tone, covering his face with his hands, "do not look so mournfully at me. I do love you, indeed I do! But what have I to do with her? She will be in heaven, and *I* — could *I* go there? No, no; they would see the blood on my soul; they would see the hatred in my heart; the *Savior* would turn and look at me, and I *could not bear* that look! — No, I have no place in heaven. How I should *hate* those holy angels! I would teach them to rebel against their tyrant — But there *is no God!*"

Exhausted by his own violence, the unhappy sufferer lay perfectly still for a long time, breathing with great difficulty. When he spoke again it was still on eternity.

"Ha!" said he, "are you there? have you come to accuse me? — It is false! I *did not* intend

to kill you — it was accident, not design. Why do you all look at me? O, I *cannot* hide my heart; — *God* is looking at it. How fearfully he frowns upon me ! ”

A shudder passed over his frame ; — it was the touch of the destroying angel.

“ I am cold,” he said ; “ the snow is drifting over me. *Must* I perish here, so near my home, my own home ? I see the elm ; — there is the swing on its branches. *Must* I freeze to death ? The light is gone ! No, there it comes ; — *he* is carrying it. O, now it is dark ! ”

He hid his face in his hands and lay a moment in a convulsive fit of shuddering which shook the bed ; then, suddenly looking up, —

“ Why will you suffocate me ? ” he gasped. “ Open the windows, open them ; the air is as hot as fire ; it is fire ; shall I breathe it forever ? ” His father stepped to the window to uncloset it ; but before he had opened it the immortal spirit was in eternity, and the last word he uttered was “ *Eternity ! there is none !* ”

The window was unclosed, the fresh morning air came laden with perfume into that chamber of death, and the bright rays of the rising sun shone full on the convulsed features of the ghastly corpse.

Alas, for that *soul*! Intellect, education, had not fitted him for heaven. Science had poured her light upon his mind; literature had spread her varied stores before him; and his noble mind had enriched itself with all the treasures which human intellect can grasp. All, all was vain, and worse than vain, as it made his responsibility greater and rendered him more acutely sensible to mental suffering. Without faith in the divine Redeemer, it availed nothing. That glorious soul, with all its exalted qualities, had passed the dark "valley of the shadow of death" with no faith to sustain it in that dreadful moment, no hope of a better world, but a dark uncertainty before it, a fearful expectation of retributive justice.

Isaiah Rogers and his kind-hearted wife came to comfort the bereaved parents; but what comfort could they give? They knew there was no hope for the departed soul. The wretched father said, in the accents of despair, "He is to be eternally miserable, and I must meet him in another world and hear his reproaches for my neglect. O, it is I who have killed his soul! I am *worse* than a murderer, for I have *killed* his *soul*."

"Do not speak so, my friend; give thy heart

to thy God," said the Quaker. "He will comfort thee, though I cannot."

"God will not listen to me, if I should ask for pardon; my sin is too great for pardon. He entrusted to my care an immortal soul, and how have I fulfilled my trust? No, there is no hope for me!"

The good Quaker was affected even to tears, by the anguish of the unhappy man; especially as he could not deny the truth of his assertions. All he could do was to pray with him and for him, and entreat him to seek consolation where alone it could be found.

Vainly did Mr. Allen mourn over the memory of his son, and bitterly regret his own unfaithfulness.

His wife seemed broken-hearted, but her sorrow was of a gentler nature than the despair of her husband. She listened readily to the wife of the good Quaker, as she led her thoughts to the mercy of God, who is ever ready to listen to the penitent sinner, and who has said, "Come, all ye that are weary and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Her spirit, wounded and broken with sorrow, needed support, and she eagerly listened to the promises contained in the gospel. Submission

and repentance were not at variance with her gentle heart, and though she never ceased mourning for her lost son, she became a true Christian, and looked forward to another world for the happiness she did not expect in this.

Her health had been too much impaired by watching and anxiety to be again restored, and she grew weaker every day. Her husband watched over her with an agony which knew no bounds. He was too much absorbed with sorrow to listen to any other subject, and his wife had the misery of thinking she must not hope to meet either husband or son in another world.

God pitied her in her affliction; and one morning in August she asked to be placed in the same chair George had sat in the evening before he died, and seated at the window. She looked out on the same scene he looked on last; but the fruit-trees were now laden with fruit instead of blossoms, the fields were covered with the waving grain, ripe for the sickle, and the Connecticut now flowed calmly by, much narrower than in the spring, when the torrents from the hills had been pouring their annual tribute into its bosom.

The wife of Isaian Rogers was with her sick

friend, and her husband sat by her side, holding her thin pale hand in his.

The change from sadness to joy on her pallid countenance was noticed by her attentive husband, as she mentally thanked God for his mercy to her; and turning to the kind woman who had watched her declining health with so much tenderness, she thanked her fervently for all her kindness.

For a moment her utterance seemed obstructed, and her husband sprang to her side, — for he had been walking the room with an expression of bitter feeling on his manly face.

The pain was but for a moment; she looked calmly in her husband's face, and said with a sweet smile, "Farewell, my dearest friend! I hope to meet you in a better world, where there shall be neither sickness nor sorrow. Farewell!"

She closed her eyes, a slight convulsion flitted across her mild features, and her peaceful spirit went to meet its Creator. She had died without a struggle, and her husband was left indeed alone.

After the death of his wife, Mr. Allen seemed to take no interest in any thing; the business of the farm he has resigned entirely to the faithful Thomas, who has lived with him from childhood.

The heart-broken man will see no one, but employs himself in visiting George's favorite haunts, the old elm, the meadow, and the maple wood, and still refuses any consolation.

He seldom talks to any one, and his form is bent with premature old age, for he is not yet fifty.

The sad fate of his idolized boy — the overthrow of all his bright hopes and fond expectations — is the subject which engrosses his whole mind, and leaves no room for higher, holier thoughts.

He thinks his sin in neglecting the soul of his child, and educating him without the fear of God or love of the Bible, has forever excluded him from all hope of pardon or mercy ; and he spends his whole time in vain thoughts, bitter feelings of remorse and regret.

It is evident to all who see him, that his health is so enfeebled by sorrow and anxiety, he will soon be where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. He is a *lonely* and *broken-hearted* man.



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